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THE GOSPEL
IN
THE GOSPELS

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THE GOSPELS

BY

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To

SILAS McBEE

True Friend

and

Faithful Critic

PREFACE

The title of the present volume is intended to indicate that, while it aims to be an exposition of the whole Gospel of Jesus Christ, it does not purpose to be a whole or final exposition of that Gospel. It looks forward definitely to a further and fuller expression of it. We have here to do with the Gospel, not in its developed utterance as that of the New Testament or of the Church, but only so far as it is contained in our canonical Gospels or can by ourselves be deduced from them. My own position is that, while the Gospel as an act or fact is complete in Jesus Christ Himself, the *rationale* of its operation in human salvation is best interpreted and stated by St. Paul. My true objective point has therefore been the completer construction of the Gospel according to St. Paul, to be treated in a volume to follow the present one. That the epistles of St. Paul are an interpretation only, and not a transformation nor even an essential modification, of the Gospel of our Lord is — next to the hope of casting a single new ray of light upon the nature of the Gospel itself — the point which I have most at heart to prove in the end.

Indeed, in opposition to what is claimed in high quarters to be the well-nigh acknowledged conclusion

of present criticism, my own firm conviction is that the variant conceptions of the Gospel in the New Testament, so far from being different gospels, are consistent and mutually completive aspects of the one and only Gospel. In proportion as we conceive the Gospel of God in its entirety and in its immensity, in just that degree do all scriptural, as well as all truly Christian and catholic, statements of it, no matter how partial and seemingly contradictory in themselves, fall into their proper places and serve to magnify the greatness and harmony of the whole. If the Gospel is divine at all, it is the divinest fact of the universe, the final cause of creation, the end for which all else exists. Mistake any one fragment or aspect of it for the whole, and all the other fragments and aspects will be involved in confused and hopeless contention with it for the usurped position. Let the whole stand out for itself in its complete proportions, and every part falls of itself into its proper place, and is confirmed and supported in it by every other part.

On the other hand, however necessary it is for us to know the whole Gospel in order to know any part, it is equally necessary if we would know the whole that we shall not ignore or neglect any one or more of the parts. Besides other grievous consequences, it is only as we do full justice to the claims of every least fragment of the Gospel, that we can guard legitimately or effectively against the fatal withdrawals from the unity of Christianity of the parts that are denied rightful expression within it. Moved by these considerations, I look forward to an entrance into the full mind of the

New Testament by way of a comprehensive comparison of all its diverse points of view and variant expressions of the Gospel.

Not only so, but in this volume itself, which is but part of the proposed plan, I have recognized the fact that even within the narrower limits of the Gospels which give us our record of the Gospel, there are not only possible but actual diverse impressions of what the Gospel is; and that not only is full justice due to each such impression, taken by itself and for its own sake, but that the very fullest justice to each is the only way of arriving at the truth of all, or at the truth of the whole of which they are the complementary and necessary parts. The one great lesson that must forerun and make ready the Christian unity of the future is this: that contraries do not necessarily contradict, nor need opposites always oppose. What we want is not to surrender or abolish our differences, but to unite and compose them. We need the truth of every variant opinion and the light from every opposite point of view. The least fragment is right in so far as it stands for a part of the truth. It is wrong only when, as so often, it elevates into a ground of division from the other fragments just that which in reality fits it to unite with and supplement them.

What has been said may indicate at least the spirit and temper in which the study before us is sought to be conducted. I speak here, of course, only in generalities; the concrete application or use of the principles enunciated must be found and judged in the book itself.

As a matter of form rather than of substance, I feel that there will be a question as to the success with which the promise of method or procedure has been carried out in the volume before us. The matter is treated in the following order: (1) the Gospel of the Common Humanity, (2) the Gospel of the Work, and (3) the Gospel of the Person of our Lord. And each of these is to be considered, as far as possible, by itself and independently of the others. There are those who hold the first of these and not the other two, or the first two and not the third — at least in the full sense in which we think Christianity includes them all. And we were under obligation to do full justice to the point of view of all. If I have succeeded but imperfectly in doing this, if I have at times, contrary to promise, run the lower position up into the higher, or anticipated the higher in the lower, it is at least a question where the responsibility lies. It may be that what I myself believe to be, not three gospels, but three aspects or stages of one and the same Gospel, may indeed be so. And it may be that they themselves do, of themselves and in spite of us, so run up together into one, that it is impossible for us, however honest we may be in the effort to do justice to each by itself, to keep them apart; so predetermined are they, and determined, to find each its own meaning and fulfilment, not in the separate truth of each, but in the united and common truth of all.

So let us agree to disagree, if conscientiously we must, in all our manifold differences; and, bringing all our differences together, let us see if they are not wiser

than we, and if they cannot and will not of themselves find agreement in a unity that is higher and vaster than we.

W. P. DuBose

Sewanee, St. Luke's Day, 1905

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

THE question of the present is, and we may safely assume that more and more the question of the future is going to be — What is Christianity? There was probably never a time when more, and a more real, interest was felt in the truth of Christ and Christianity. There was certainly never a time when so many and so conflicting conceptions existed as to the meaning of Christ and Christianity.

When the necessity was first laid upon Christianity to define itself, the process by which it did so was one of gradual and progressive but strict and thoroughgoing exclusion. Not only was nothing permitted the name which contradicted the nature, but nothing that fell short at any point of the totality of the truth of Christianity, as Christianity understood itself. It was not only the truth and nothing but the truth, — it was the whole truth or nothing, the highest or none. Whatever may be said of the spirit or temper in which to too great an extent this process of exclusion was carried out to the bitter end, from no point of view can we with propriety deprecate the result of it. God may have made the wrath of man as well as his zeal and devotion to praise Him, but humanly speaking no other spirit or temper, and no other method, could have effected the working out to its logical conclusion and expression

the principle or truth implicitly contained in Christianity.

Unquestionably truth is one, and only error is manifold. Truth is one and is a whole, and not seldom we can say that that which is less than the truth is as untrue as that which is contrary to it. But, for all that, there may be a time when for the truth's sake a very different temper, and a very different and even an opposite method, may be most proper and most useful in dealing with it. I propose — with what right or propriety only the result can determine — to treat the sadly vexed question of Christianity by a process the reverse of that which was necessary in the beginning, by a process of inclusion rather than of exclusion. So far from saying that only that is true which is the whole truth, I bring forward the complementary and not contradictory fact that that which has in it any part of the truth is so far true. I hold that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is so true and so living in every part that he who truly possesses and truly uses any broken fragment of it may find in that fragment something — just so much — of gospel for his soul and of salvation for his life. In testing and illustrating this fact, if it be such, it will not be necessary for us to examine each one of the parts into which Christianity is broken up in these days. There are a few stages or degrees of faith in Christ and Christianity in one or other of which every phase worth considering is contained and under which it may be sufficiently considered for our purpose.

In the first place, there is many a profoundly religious — and shall we not say Christian? — soul,

including now some of the greatest upon earth, whose faith in Jesus may be expressed somewhat as follows: They will not undertake to say anything of our Lord, theirs as well as ours, before His appearance by birth in the world or after His departure by death from it. On such points as these they are at the best, or at the most, agnostic. But between these two points of birth and death, in the earthly life lived in common with us all, in the simple fact that Jesus Christ was the man He was and lived the life He lived, they find as much of gospel and of salvation as, they think, humanity can or humanity ought to receive on this earth. What or how much that truly is, it shall be our first task carefully and sympathetically to examine and measure. Let us call this gospel, or so much of the Gospel as this, the gospel of the earthly life, or of the common humanity, of our Lord.

In the second place, in reading the Gospels and trying to understand them according to their intention, it cannot escape the attention of most of us that, however essentially and completely human we see the life of Jesus to be, still we cannot but also see that as human it transcends the ordinarily possible limits of the human. There is no one of the Gospels, there was no Gospel before the Gospels, which does not end necessarily, which does not from the beginning mean to end, in the resurrection. But it is not only that; — in our Lord's own clear consciousness, in the unquestioning concession on the part of all the records, of His personal sinlessness, we have a fact which as much transcends the powers and limits of all other earthly life as His

resurrection does. The Gospel from the beginning was not at all that Jesus most perfectly represented our common nature or illustrated our human life, but that He brought with Him something into our nature and life which was not there before, and raised them into something which was not themselves or their own, and to which they could attain only in and through Him. What that was was expressed in the Christian consciousness that Jesus Christ is the human, but the divine-human, conqueror and destroyer of sin and of death. Let us call this second phase or stage of the Gospel the gospel of the resurrection.

In the third place, however sincerely and genuinely human we may regard the life and life-work of Jesus, when once we have recognized in His accomplishment or attainment as man that which transcends human accomplishment or attainment — however it may be in the line of man's higher nature and destiny — we have raised inevitably a further question. How does this man break through or pass beyond the possibilities of universal human nature as it is? How does that which is born of the flesh become in Him more than flesh? The immediate answer was and is: The work wrought in humanity through the life in it of Jesus Christ was no mere act of humanity, however exceptional. It was a work wrought by God in humanity. If, on the one side, it was humanity fulfilling or completing itself in God, it was only so because, on the other side, it was equally and primarily God fulfilling and completing humanity in Himself. How then was the so unique or exceptional personality of

Jesus to be accounted for or explained? Was He only a human individual exceptionally blessed or graced? Or, while perfect man, was He, just because perfect man, something more than man? Perfection is no mark of our common humanity, and needs a very high accounting for. So from the beginning begins a questioning which Christianity answers for itself in the gospel of the Incarnation.

There is no form of faith in Jesus Christ true enough to be called a gospel or vital enough to be a salvation which, measured by its own self-limitation, may not be classed under one or other of these several "gospels," or phases or stages of the one Gospel. I claim for each that, if it be real and vital and true so far as it goes, it *is*, so far as it goes, a gospel, and brings in it just so much of salvation.

Our interest in these days in so far undertaking an advocacy of partial truths of the Gospel is no, true or false, sympathy with partial truth, but interest in the truth itself, whole and perfect. The fact of which we are not yet fully aware, and gainst which we have not yet sufficiently guarded, is this: that the so-called *whole* of truth is quite as apt to ignore or pervert the parts, as the parts are to be blind to the other parts and to the whole. So true is this, that it is a common fact that in larger and more catholic forms of Christianity not merely aspects but important truths and even living powers of the Gospel are so lost to sight and use that we may have to go outside to find them at all, perchance in some fragmentary sect which has been driven outside by its overpowering sense of the im-

portance or necessity of knowing and using them. It is no weak concession then, or condescending charity, that ought to lead us to do full justice to what we consider mutilated or incomplete conceptions of Christianity. We ought to go to them in humility, to learn of them sides and uses of the truth which it may well be they understand better than ourselves. So I go, for example, to the gospel of only the earthly life and the common humanity of our Lord to learn many a lesson and catch many a vision and inspiration of the truth as it is in Jesus, which I am sure is lost to those of us who in the higher ignore the details of the so-called lower side of that divinely human life.

We are to study the Gospel as it is to be found in the Gospels. And there is a threefold view of the Gospels somewhat corresponding to the three stages of the Gospel which we have been considering.

The first and main function of at least the Synoptic Gospels would seem to have been purely reportorial. By far the larger part of them is pure record. They are reports, without note or comment, of our Lord's appearance or appearances, where He went, what He said and did. Never were there writings in which there was so little of the writers, so clear and uncoloured an impression of their subject. But this is not absolutely or entirely so. Before our Gospels attained their present form there had been no little reflection upon the whole earthly appearance, and no little interpretation of the words, the work, and the person of Him who had left so deep a mark upon the world.

Now the time has passed when men are able to question the historical personality or identity of the man Christ Jesus. And the time has passed too when they can depreciate the uniqueness and permanence, not to say finality, of His impression upon human history and human destiny. No less is the time past when our Gospels can be resisted or rejected as in the main truthful and true reports of how Jesus appeared and what He said and did in His life on earth. But there are men, among the greatest, and scholars the most learned, the most conscientious, the most devout, who, while able to accept so much of the Gospels as is of pure record, find themselves unable to receive what they conceive to be the results and additions of later reflection upon and later human interpretation of the actual facts of the Gospel.

No one can deny that it is legitimate for a properly equipped criticism — by which I mean a criticism competent to judge of spiritual as well as natural facts and phenomena — to apply the strictest historical tests to the historical facts of Christianity. Making the best, which means also the most critical, use of their materials, profound and devout students construct out of the records as we have them the truest, completest, and most self-consistent conception they can of the person of the great founder of Christianity. In doing this they pass by or reject those elements which seem to them inconsistent or incongruous, as not belonging to the objective fact to be reported but originating in the subjective impression and interpretation of the reporters, or of later believers generally. Such a mode of treatment

is not only not to be condemned, but it is not to be avoided. But it will be a long time before a critical acumen sufficiently true and adequate, spiritual enough as well as scientific and philosophical enough, will be generally developed to give us permanent results on this line. Meantime each succeeding and temporarily successful such attempt will be subjected to the tests of time and ever-enlarging experience, and will survive or perish according to its truth or falsity. Still we shall never attain to the larger and truer criticism of the future except as we are trained in the cruder and confessedly still imperfect criticism of the present. And it is only through the growth and discipline of the critical faculty and function, of the powers of discrimination and judgment, that we can be educated to a higher understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the highest truth. In the first stage, therefore, of our study of the Gospel I shall follow, as best I may, in the track of the critics. I shall endeavour to admit nothing in the Synoptic Gospels and as of the Gospel which the best present criticism will not admit as pure record, as being of the objective truth of which they are the truthful reporters.

We have recognized the fact that beside the bare record or report of objective fact which constitutes the bulk of the Synoptic Gospels, they all more or less abundantly contain matter that may or may not be objectively true also, but that is the subjective conception and interpretation of the objective facts on the part of the writers, or of the Church which they represent. This Christian or Church interpretation takes

two directions and assumes two forms. It is first an interpretation of what we call "the work" of our Lord, meaning by that the purpose and result of His whole human life — as, for example, atoning, redeeming, new-creating, etc. It is often, of course, difficult to separate between pure record and subjective interpretation, inextricably intermixed as they are. As an instance, the account of the intimate connection between the successive ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus is doubtless largely simple report of the facts. It is common to all the Gospels and seems to have been from the first the starting point of the public life and of all the stories of Jesus. Yet I think we shall see that in the form which the narrative has uniformly assumed there has been already embodied, in the contrast between John and Jesus, and more especially in the significance of their respective baptisms, a statement and interpretation of the whole work of Jesus than which nothing could be more comprehensive or exact. With regard to all subsequent reflection and interpretation of the life and work of Jesus it must be at least admitted that it is separable in thought from the objectively true facts which it undertakes to explain. At the same time it has itself to be understood and accounted for. We have seen that the ultimate and complete form assumed by reflection upon and explanation of the life-work of Jesus Christ is to be found in what I have called the second phase of the Gospel, the gospel of the resurrection: Jesus Christ — the conqueror of sin and destroyer of death, the author and finisher of holiness, of righteousness, of eternal life.

The other direction taken by Christian reflection has to do with not the work but the person of our Lord. But it was not the less inevitable, and has equal claim to validity. Admit the nature of the work, and you cannot escape or avoid the question of the person of the worker. There may be doubt as to whether or to what extent this question is raised or answered in the Synoptic Gospels. Whether or no what we call the Gospel of the Infancy is at all part of the record, or at any rate of the primitive or original record, this at least is certain about it. It did not belong to the very earliest form of either oral or written gospel, which began, as in St. Mark, with the public life, and knows, or at least includes, as yet nothing of the previous private history of Jesus. When it is later included, it may indeed be so as fuller record of facts, to fill out a completer narrative from more perfect information. But unquestionably there was a further motive for its introduction. The question was up of the mystery of the person of the Lord. It is not answered in the Gospel of the Infancy it is true. In all the stories of the birth there is nothing which affirms or necessarily postulates a previous personal existence. But at least the line of reflection and interpretation is entered upon which finds no possible or satisfactory close until it completes and expresses itself in the Prologue of St. John, — that is to say, in the Gospel of the Incarnation.

PART FIRST

THE GOSPEL OF THE EARTHLY LIFE

OR

THE COMMON HUMANITY

I

THE IMPRESSION OF THE EARTHLY LIFE OF JESUS

We are, in this part of our work, to study the Gospel upon the lower plane of the common humanity which our Lord shared with ourselves. From the records of which we are to make use we exclude not only the Fourth Gospel, but the Gospel of the Birth and Infancy and whatever other portions of the Synoptic Gospels may reasonably be supposed to belong to a later stage of gospel representation. Confining ourselves then as nearly as we may to the primitive gospel of pure record, we are prepared to make to criticism the following admissions:

In the first place, the historical appearance of Jesus Christ, taken as a whole, was distinctly and completely a human appearance. He made a great, a boundless claim upon human faith and allegiance, but it was not a claim which He Himself based upon any essential personal difference between Himself and the common or universal humanity. He did not demand allegiance upon the ground of His being more than man, but solely upon the ground of what He was as man. He nowhere in His lifetime asserts, or was understood by those who stood nearest Him to assert, His divine

personality. The highest claim He admits is that in response to Peter's confession: Thou art the Christ, or Thou art the Christ of God, or — in the fullest form reported — Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. These were all alike well understood Messianic expressions. The Messiah was to be in a very high sense the representative and expression of God's presence upon earth, but in no sense, as yet, which implied his own personal deity. Indeed the passive form and signification of the word Messiah or Anointed One emphasized the fact that the essence of Messiahship was humanity indwelt and sanctified by Deity. This is not at all to deny that there was a higher claim involved in our Lord's personality. But the claim did not appear, was not asserted, in His earthly life. The claim of divinity was to rest solely upon what He was and accomplished in humanity, and it waited upon that consummation to assert itself. Meanwhile, Jesus' whole appearance was, as we have said, distinctively a human one, — a man indeed always with God, and with whom God always was, but still always, in His highest knowledge, in His most mysterious powers, a man. Even after His resurrection He is still to St. Peter "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved unto you of God by mighty works which God did by Him in the midst of you."

Upon what grounds in His lifetime did the Apostles accept our Lord's Messiahship? Not, certainly, upon any which had been anticipated or expected as signs of the Messiah. Not chiefly, I think we may say, upon the ground of His possession and exercise of mysterious

powers. To the mind of His time He Himself had to distinguish those powers from those of Beelzebub by an appeal to their opposite quality or character. He deprecated, and trusted not Himself to, a faith that rested only on miracles. I think we may say that what He was really believed on for was — Himself, what He was as man. It was His divinity indeed, but a divinity manifested or visible to them only in the quality and character of His humanity, in the perfection of His human holiness, in the spiritual power of His human life. Why did they cling to Him through every trial of their faith? To whom else, having even imperfectly known Him, could they go? To them He had the words, already to them He was The Word, of eternal life. That was His permanent credential, and that was His only plea.

If we turn to those who still in our own day decline to go for their gospel beyond the earthly life and the common humanity of our Lord — what answer will they give for clinging to His person and finding their salvation in His life? I think we may say that the answer as it has shaped itself to that question is something like the following: Humanity continues, and will always continue, to believe and to find itself in Jesus, because Jesus embodies and expresses to humanity the truth of itself; the truth, the beauty and the goodness of itself. And truth, beauty, and goodness are the sum of what is of value, and ought to be of interest, to humanity. But why and how does Jesus Christ represent to us all that? We do not know; we need not know. He does; we accept the fact, because it is

self-demonstrating; we cannot go the length of the explanations, because we believe they extend beyond the limits of our knowledge or proof.

Well, let us go just so far, and no farther, and find in so much the truth and power contained in it. We believe in Jesus because we find in Jesus the truth and good that most concern us, the truth and good of ourselves. Men of profoundest thought and of sincerest life in our own time have, in spiritual and moral extremity, found salvation in Jesus Christ, simply because they discovered in Him what did not exist for them without Him — a meaning and a reason for human existence and human life. The revelation to us, no matter how it comes, of the truth, the meaning, the reason, the good, the value, and above all — the way, the secret, of the infinitely interesting and important mystery we call life, ought to be to us surely nothing short of a gospel and a salvation.

The personality and life of Jesus could never have taken, and still less could maintain in perpetuity, the hold it has upon the world, if it were not true to the facts of the world. If Jesus Christ were not the truth, the beauty, the good sought by all the best thought and touched by all the best experience of humanity — humanity would not have given Him, would not give Him, its highest, its final allegiance. Every knee would not bow to Him, every tongue confess Him Lord. It will be interesting to recall a few of the leading principles of our Lord's life and character, and to correlate them with the best that has been thought or done before or apart from Him.

In the first place, Jesus took definite part with the West against the East in making the distinctive note of life not *apatheia* but *energeia*. Thought, desire, will were not to be abjured and disowned in despair, through the overpowering sense of their futility. Life was not to be reduced to zero through their renunciation, but raised to infinity through their affirmation and satisfaction. The life of Christianity is a life of infinite energy because it is a life of infinite faith and hope. It can be all things, do all things, endure all things. It feels no limit in itself, it sets no limit to itself, short of absolute perfection. It sets no limit to knowledge, because it believes itself made for the truth, and that the truth best worth knowing, the truth of self and of life, will more and more reveal and verify itself to us the more we know and love and live it. It sets no limit to desire, but covets earnestly the best things. It is conscious of an infinite poverty, and finds in it only the potency and promise of an infinite riches and satisfaction. Pleasure and happiness are not things to be denied and mortified. They are to be placed and found in the right objects, and to be swallowed up but not lost in the blessedness of the perfect life. And so finally it sets no limit to will, to activity, to achievement and attainment. If our wills are ours only as we surrender them to the larger will that comprehends and embraces all — our wills are His only as we have made His ours, and have found in His the highest freedom, realization, and satisfaction of our own. And so not only as against the aged pessimism of the East, but equally against the most modern fatalistic necessi-

tarianism of the West, Jesus Christ raises to the highest pitch the universal human sense and consciousness of personal freedom and of eternally and divinely free personality.

In the second place, Jesus Christ makes Himself at one with the earliest and best ethical thought of the West in that He places the issues and decision of life, and the happiness that is the sense or consciousness of life, not without but within us, not in the action upon us of environment, but in our own free and personal reaction upon environment. Environment is the condition, but we are the causes, of life and its blessedness — or the reverse. Aristotle had said: It is the energies, the acts and activities, of ourselves, of our own souls that control, that determine and constitute happiness. Nature makes us nothing; it constitutes us, by the possession and use of reason and freedom, to make ourselves all that in life we, that is we humanly, personally, become. It is the essence of personality that it is made to be the maker of itself. Now Jesus Christ emphasizes and deepens this great fact or truth of life when He says to us: The kingdom of Heaven is within you. He Himself had found and entered the kingdom of Heaven. He had discovered the meaning and had experienced the blessedness of human life, — even such a life as outwardly His own was. We shall see as we proceed, as the essential difference between Him and all others, that all that human philosophy in even an Aristotle could conceive or express, He *was*. More than that, He was all that He Himself taught. The kingdom of Heaven was all in Him, because His life

realized and embodied all that constitutes and belongs to the kingdom of Heaven.

In the third place, Jesus Christ is the great, the only, interpreter to us of the meaning and reason of human environment as we find it. It is not only that environment is the condition of life, that we determine ourselves only through our response to its action upon us. If we are to take actuality as we find it, if we deal not with theory but with actual conditions, our conclusion must be that only in an environment of evil can good determine or realize itself. Even in that lower world of mere animal evolution in which there is so much of purely natural or physical evil, and which we pronounce so inexplicable a mystery, can we see how there could have been the evolution of sensuous pleasure only through and in contrast with the sense of pain? But the question enters much more into the field of our experience and understanding when we pass into the world of moral action and life. Within the sphere of finite activity the development of moral good appears to be absolutely conditioned upon an environment of moral evil. To take it at once in its most developed form, there is no holiness possible or thinkable for us which is not a distinct attitude towards, a definite action upon, what we know as sin. If we did not know the one we should not know the other. Jesus Christ was no exception. His holiness was a resistance unto blood to sin. The moral significance of His death was that it was a death to sin. His perfection was accomplished through His personal attitude, His moral or spiritual superiority, to the things He suffered. There

ought to be no mystery to us in the outward experiences, in the temptations, the fierce trials, the afflictions and sufferings of Jesus Christ. We ought to know that the moral victory He won, the spiritual height He attained, could not have been won or attained by Him as man except through such an outward experience, except in reaction and conflict with such a world of spiritual and moral evil. The perfect realization by Jesus Christ of all that is true, beautiful, or good in humanity as personal response to all of spiritual, moral, and natural evil that met and assailed Him in His outward life, is God's answer, if not to the full meaning and necessity, yet to His own use in the world of actuality of the mystery of evil.

But, in the fourth place, the contribution of Jesus to the truth and meaning of human life goes nearer still to the heart of the matter. In the "virtue" of the Greek, the "righteousness" of the Hebrew, and the "holiness" of Christianity, we have three types or standards of human conduct and character. With the Greek man himself was the measure and the end. The ideal man was he who the most symmetrically, perfectly, and happily realized or fulfilled himself. As in plastic art he strove to express the perfect balance or proportion of physical beauty, so by a higher spiritual æsthetic perception and measurement he endeavoured to portray the fair features and proportions of the moral ideal, the "beautiful and good" in humanity. But the ideal man, if he combined in himself elements of both the beautiful and the good, the æsthetic and the moral, inclined very much more in the direction

of the former than of the latter. Self-respect, supreme regard for one's "own fair personality" was the dominant if not the sole motive. The ideal was a beautiful one, and true in so far as the highest beauty must necessarily approximate the true and the good. But there was still too much in it of egoism to allow of its identification with these.

The Hebrew saw in his standard and measure of human life and conduct something vaster and more objective than the perfection and beauty of his own earthly personality. The law with him was something more than that of nature or his own finite nature. The Greek or Roman virtue was the following or fulfilling of nature, the realizing of manhood. The Hebrew righteousness was the recognition of a law, and behind the law a personality, infinitely beyond and above himself or his own. The tribunal before which he bowed was not his own right reason or the wider wisdom of the community revising his private judgment. There was a judgment seat more awful than the æsthetic taste of the individual or the public opinion of society. The power not himself that made for righteousness, no matter how it came or how it revealed itself to him, was to him the sum of all reality. We need not in this connection dwell upon this conception of the standard or measure of life further than to remember that it was an objective universal law other than which there could be no rule or principle of obligation in the heavens above or in the earth beneath.

The Hebrew point of view, while relieving the standard of the finite human subjectivity which made man

alone the measure, was in danger of the opposite extreme of making the law too wholly objective; and we may add, of separating the power or presence behind the law too far from human life. If the law had needed to be made more objective and universal, it needed now again to become more subjective and more human. It was the problem in process of solution, how to combine the opposite truths of immanence and transcendence. Jesus Christ, by not stopping at the law but going at once behind and beyond it, by recognizing the fact that no objective law can produce subjective life or righteousness, because law is only the outward form, the expression or letter, of the inward substance which we call spirit, — Jesus Christ took the third and final step which completes the account of human life. If the passage had needed to be made from finite subjectivity to infinite objectivity, equally necessary was the passage made once for all by Him from the infinite objective to the infinite subjective, from the absolute without us in the form of law to the absolute within us in the form of spirit. The essence of the moral teaching of Jesus was the change of venue from the tribunal of law to that of spirit. The act of humanity in His own person was most exactly expressed in the words: "Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot." In Him eternal law had given place to eternal spirit, the letter that killeth to the spirit that giveth life.

We are considering the truth of Jesus just now not from the standpoint of Christianity but in its correlation with other reflections and conclusions upon human

life. And so we may ask ourselves: What is this eternal spirit through which Jesus Christ has realized forever for us the true meaning and end of humanity? Let us try briefly to answer this question. Science more and more recognizes the universe as one, and as a universe of order. Now what is the unity and the order that constitute the reality of the universe? In the order in which it appears to us, it is first material or physical, and then moral, and then spiritual. Which of these is the real? In the actual evolution of our individual selves, we are first purely physical, and then psychical, and finally spiritual or personal. Which of these is *we?* Do we find the reality of ourselves in the physical, the psychical, or the personal — the spiritual and moral — self? Man is not what he is in process, but what he is when complete. He is, as Aristotle teaches us, his highest part. Everything is to be defined by its end, by what it will be when its becoming is completed and it is perfect. If we are to interpret this universe as a whole, in the light of that which is its manifest direction and logical end, we cannot but conclude that the natural order exists as the necessary condition of a higher moral order, which in turn has no meaning or possibility except as the form or expression of a yet higher spiritual or personal order. It is absurd to object to this that the moral and spiritual orders are still so far from existence. There is nothing contradictory or impossible in the immediate existence of a material order, and yet even that was a matter of inconceivably slow evolution. An immediate moral or spiritual order is impossible,

because by its very nature it must evolve or constitute itself. As surely as gravitation or evolution are laws of the universe, is righteousness a law of the universe, — and behind and before them all is that spirit of which alone righteousness is the law, the ultimate truth and reality of the universe. Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of nature and the realization of humanity because He is the embodiment of the moral and spiritual order, not only the infinite law but the eternal spirit of the universe.

But we have not yet given a real definition of the eternal spirit which Jesus Christ embodied and revealed. His contribution to life was the truth which is at once first and last, — that there is no human good but goodness. We can know good first only as our own. That existence itself, that life or anything pertaining to life, is a good, we can only know as we experience the pleasure, the value, or worth of them for ourselves. But the good which as such we can first know only as our own we can then, by necessary inference, know and will to others as theirs. And this is the origin and essence of goodness. Man is never from the first an individual but always a social being. He has his existence in, with, and through others. He lives and becomes all that constitutes himself only in concrete relationships and in actual personal exchanges between himself and them. A man can be a good man only by fulfilling his natural relations, by being a good son, brother, husband, father, friend, neighbour, citizen. And as this is his only impersonal goodness, so is it his only personal

good. He cannot realize himself except in, with, and through others. His universe is so constructed, his life is so constituted, that there is no good for him except goodness. He cannot love himself except as he loves others as himself. He cannot find himself except as he loses himself in others. Jesus saw and not only perfectly expressed but perfectly embodied the fact that goodness or love is the secret and the essence of human life. And of human only because of all life. It is the beginning and the end of all reality. As the natural exists only for the moral, so the moral is only the outward expression, the law, of the spiritual. And the spiritual, which is the real, is infinite and eternal goodness. The real law of the universe is the law of righteousness, and the true soul and life of righteousness is the spirit of love, whom the world calls God.

It follows not only naturally but necessarily from the above that Jesus, calling Himself always Son of Man, — that is, true, essential manhood, — should speak of Himself as having come into the world not to be served but to serve, to be the servant of all, even to the point of giving His life for all. Love, service, sacrifice, — these He has, not made, but revealed in His person and human life to be the spirit and law and reality of the universe.

II

THE GROWTH AND PREPARATION OF JESUS

We have been considering our Lord's earthly life from the standpoint of conceptions of life in general. We come back now to study it from the point of view and in terms of the distinctively Christian records. If our Gospels are to be supposed to include properly only the report of the public ministry (as defined in Acts 1:21, 22), we must remember that Jesus appears in that ministry at the age of thirty, with full qualification and authority to discharge its functions. There was no apparent question within Himself of Himself, and no questioning of Him on the part of those capable of feeling the force of His authority. It is to the records so limited as though He had come into the world fully equipped for His part in it. But if Jesus was human, He was so not only in what He was at His height, but in the process by which He attained that height and became what He was. If we are to know *Him*, without which it is impossible to know His life or His life-work, we are obliged to take into account the contribution of the thirty years of preparation for His ministry.

The traditions of our Lord's youth later prefixed to the records, brief as they are, are, when we consider

them carefully, singularly probable in matter and exact and illuminating in expression. The child Jesus, we are told in St. Luke, — after the circumstances of His birth and the formalities of His circumcision, presentation, etc., have been narrated, — grew and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. The general terms are practically identical with those just before applied to John the Baptist: The child grew and waxed strong in spirit. They are in either case descriptive of a normal, purely human, not only physical but spiritual, youthful development. But in the case of Jesus the description is more explicit, as doubtless the growth described was fuller and more complete. In the first place, the child grew and matured *pari passu* in all the elements or parts of a complete human development, physical, intellectual, spiritual. It is added: Filled, or properly filling, becoming more and more full, of wisdom. Emphasis is naturally, perhaps unconsciously, laid upon the inward and outward means and process by which we shall see the wisdom was acquired, and the necessary progress of its accumulation. Wisdom is in itself, as Aristotle defines it, the product only of time and experience. And then, most significantly of all, come the words: And the grace of God was upon him. It in no way militates against the perfect humanness of Jesus to know that from the first, in a more complete way than through the prophets or John the Baptist before or St. Paul afterwards (who believed in his separation from his mother's womb), God was preparing to reveal or express Himself through Him. That, as we have

seen, was just the gist of the long promised messiahship which Jesus was later to assume. The grace of God is a quality communicated or imparted. It is something which, creaturely or humanly, we have not of ourselves, for which we are dependent and which we can receive only from the personal source of all personal life. It is identical with the spirit of God, that eternal spirit which lies behind all law material or spiritual, and which is the ultimate reality or fact of the universe. That divine spirit lay upon Him from the beginning, and wrought through Him all that through it He humanly accomplished or became. We cannot for a moment blind ourselves to the truth that God was the objective source and cause, and the objectively apprehended and known cause, of all the subjectively and humanly attained heights of the earthly life of Jesus Christ.

The above account of the beginnings of our Lord's life is consistently taken up and continued in the equally brief description of the incident which throws additional light upon it at the age of twelve. After narrating that incident, to which we shall return, St. Luke proceeds: And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, — in wisdom as in age and physical development, — and in favour with God and men. There is definite progress and new interpretation expressed in the last clause. The word here translated favour, and elsewhere otherwise, is the same term grace which we have been just discussing. Jesus advanced in grace with God and men. It is in reality the same grace viewed at different points, first as operating objectively from God upon

Jesus, and then secondly as operating subjectively in Jesus towards God and men. The spirit that comes from God as His appears in us as ours. There is no more exact or beautiful designation of the spirit that Jesus was of than is conveyed by the word Grace. As between Him and God it is the response of God within Him to God without. As between Him and men it is the eternal spirit looking humanly on earth upon men as God looks upon them from heaven. We have in this little touch a glimpse of the spiritual attitude at once towards God and towards men that was growing with the growth of Jesus and that was to be the sole key to the explanation of His whole life and ministry. It already manifested itself in His youth in a graciousness of spirit and manner with men which gave Him favour with them, far as yet as they were from fathoming its true depth and significance. We speak of the sweet reasonableness of Jesus. The peculiar quality we are trying to catch and fix is better expressed in terms of the heart than of the head. The sweet reasonableness rests upon a deeper and sweeter sympathy which drew Him to all men and draws all men to Him if they will but let themselves see and know Him. It is with the heart rather than with the head that we understand and know one another. The pure in heart see men as well as God as they are, and have the sweet reasonableness to deal with them as they should.

Closely connected if not identical with the spirit or temper just described is the faculty of spiritual perception or intelligence which so struck the doctors in their conversation with Him in the temple. The

power to "understand" — whether things, men, or God — lies deeper than the mind or than the natural affections. It consists in a universality of spirit that at-ones us with the objects to be understood. Jesus was among the doctors to learn, to be taught. They were amazed at His teachableness, at His quickness to comprehend, His ready response to instruction. There was in Him the opposite of the individualism which is the expression of only one's particular self. The universal and eternal in Him sought to make Him one with all. And so He thirsted and was mature beyond His years to enter into the spirit of those Scriptures which had been not only the literature but the life of God's people from the beginning. In a word, there were in the youthful Jesus all the human conditions of divine knowledge, and therefore there was in Him more and more the fulness and perfection of divine knowledge.

The unity of spirit that characterized the youth and the later ministry of our Lord may be briefly illustrated in one or two points. In St. Luke's first description of His public appearance the comment upon the impression produced is as follows: And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth. The words of grace, or the gracious words — the meaning includes both. There was first the manner that betokened the spirit, the temper or disposition, which actuated Him in speaking. It was the spirit of God speaking in Him. And then there was the matter of His speaking, than which nothing could better express the substance of

His ministry. It was the grace of God bringing through Him salvation to men. It has been remarked that Jesus loved best in the Scriptures the prophet Isaiah and the book Deuteronomy. The lesson He had read in the synagogue was from the former:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor:
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

"He anointed me to" — that then was the meaning of the anointing, the mission of the Anointed: to bring down God's spirit and grace and salvation, in a word God's eternal life, and establish it in a kingdom of God upon earth.

In the later preaching of our Lord, St. Luke reports Him as saying: If ye love them that love you, if ye do good to them that do good to you, if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive — what thank have ye? The word not improperly rendered thank or thanks means something more than that. It is again the word grace: What grace have ye? Not only what thanks or reward, not only what men will recognize and be grateful for, but what is the only motive of any true disposition or act towards others, namely, the spirit and grace of God. Therefore St. Luke reports our Lord as continuing: But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and

ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind towards the unthankful and evil. Be ye merciful even as your Father is merciful. These last words open a view into what was the heart and soul of our Lord's preparation and qualification for His ministry. Rather, they suggest the truth of all that He was to be or accomplish in and for humanity. It has always been recognized that the supreme human act and attainment of Jesus Christ was that He truly conceived and perfectly realized the fatherhood of God and so the divine sonship of men. The growth of Jesus was the development in Him of this conception and the progress of this realization. When His parents, after their three days' search, found Him in the temple, and reproached Him with the fact that they had sought Him sorrowing, His reply was: Why should they have sought Him? Where should He be but in His Father's house, interested and engaged in His Father's business? All truth was expressed for Him in that divine relationship, all duty or pleasure was contained in the life-long and life-filling task of fulfilling it. Taken alone we might seem to read too much into our Lord's use of these words in this His first recorded utterance. But they are very far from standing alone. When the preparation was over and the great call and commission to the ministry was given and received, the divine recognition of His qualification and fitness for the task came to Him from Heaven in the words: Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. The preparation for the true Messiahship is the realization of the true sonship. The fulness of the divine spirit involves

the impartation of the divine nature and the reproduction of the divine life, and that is the essence and truth of divine sonship.

But the preparation was not wholly over with the commission. The awful burden and task imposed by the latter necessitated another, a more conscious and thorough, going over of the whole ground of the former. The entire temptation in the wilderness turns upon the fact and foundations of the human divine sonship of Jesus. He was there on trial as the representative of humanity. There in and upon His person were pending and depending the destinies of humanity. We are to understand that temptation, if we understand it at all, as the supreme test and the decisive if not yet final vindication and establishment of man's sonship to God. This statement will necessitate a partial analysis of the brief story.

The account of the temptation is, in the first place, a report of actual experiences — subjective if not objective — of our Lord in the crisis of His entrance upon His ministry. But, in the second place, the account is given in language which is plainly not literal but symbolical. And this very fact gives it a significance and an application far wider than that of an individual experience; it makes it universal. Furthermore, our Lord Himself expresses the principle and application of each temptation withstood in terms as universal as humanity itself: It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone; It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Such maxims of conduct are definitely human, and these Jesus establishes at the

beginning as principles and foundations of His kingdom of the divine life on earth. These are that rock upon which, except a man build, his house cannot but fall.

The symbolism of the story of the temptation is suggested by the history of Israel as spiritually interpreted in the book of Deuteronomy. That history itself has always been accepted as symbolical of human life in general: the divine fatherhood and the great salvation; the promise of a land of rest and fruition; the condition and then the trial of the people's faith, the temptations in the wilderness; the failure to enter in because of unbelief. In contrast and reversal of Israel's temptation and defeat we have the picture of Israel's temptation and victory. The particular passage that gives form to the later story is the following (Deut. 8: 1–3): And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that He might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep His commandments or no. And He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. The lesson of life as seen in the Scriptures, Old and New, is in the first place that life comes from its divine source and not from the earthly media through which it is received. And secondly, that life, in all its potencies and promises, can be possessed and enjoyed only through faith. And faith comes only through trial. The highest and

latest energy and act of our personality, that by which we conquer the world and transcend earthly limitations and conditions, is not attained easily and painlessly. "That the proof of your faith, more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, might be found unto praise and glory and honour." The conception and realization of divine sonship with all its implications is not a plain and easy thing for flesh and blood. Even after the vision of the bared arm of the Lord in his redemption from Egypt, it was not easy for Israel to feel the presence or keep hold of the promises, to remember or exercise his divine sonship, in the land of sand and dearth. Very straight home to him went the temptation: If thou art the son of God, command that these stones be made bread. If thou art, — doubt is the beginning of all weakness, and the certain cause of all human failure. Men enter not in because of unbelief. But how in a world like this shall we believe that we are the sons of God, with power therefore to be what God is? Jesus Christ has shown us the way, by Himself entering in and so opening it to all. It was not plainer or easier for Him than for us to know Himself son of God, and so to have grace and power to perform a son's part in the world. If the heavens had opened and proclaimed Him son, it was only in recognition of the fact that by faith He had known and made Himself son. Even after that mighty demonstration and confirmation of His faith, the conditions under which, as He foresaw, He was entering upon a humanly impossible task were enough to drive Him into the wilderness of doubt and despair.

How should He accomplish the task before Him, the hopeless task of human salvation? Comparing the means with the end, how could the temptation not assail Him: If thou art the son of God, command these stones that they be made bread; — of these stones raise up children unto Abraham! I do not undertake to say just what were the elements that entered into this first temptation of our Lord. Only this I seem to see clearly: the whole question of faith, the whole human hold upon the reality of the divine fatherhood and upon the power and the promise of human sonship was at issue in it. If man is son of God; if there is warrant for faith in that divine fact; if human faith can and will lay hold upon it and conquer its way to eternal life, — then that is our gospel and our salvation. And all this was and is done by humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. He fought the battle, He proved the possibility of the victory, He showed us the place and revealed to us the secret of the power.

The lesson of the second temptation was scarcely less important. We are not more apt or prone to want faith, to be ignorant of the power of God which is ours unto salvation, than, having faith, or thinking we have it, to tempt God by presuming upon it. We are constantly expecting of faith, and complaining of not having from it, not only what it is not its function to give, but what the giving to us would be our worst undoing. We little realize how much, as believers, we expect to have done for us which we do not do for ourselves. But it is never the purpose of grace to

make us anything which *we* are not at all the pains, and the pain, of making ourselves. Nothing indeed can be added to us, in the true sense of us, which does not as truly proceed from *us* as from the higher source which only makes it ours by enabling us to make it ours. All that comes to us from God, and as God's, such as His spirit, His grace, His life, comes to us at all only as we too have so made them our own that they appear in us only as ours. It is only by the spirit we are of that we may be recognized as children of God. Whose spirit, God's or ours? Only the one if the other. The life of Jesus Christ was the opposite of one of enthusiasm or fanaticism. What He most truly was He was not by miracle but humanly, after the way of a man, — of God because of Himself, of Himself because of God — because a man is only himself in and with and through God. Though it may not appear at once, the outcome of the second temptation was the victory of hope, as that of the first was the victory of faith. Hope is of ourselves as faith is of God, as to their objects. As faith is the realization of all God in and with us, so hope is the realization of all ourselves in and with God. Because we know that all things are possible with God, therefore we know that we can be and do all things. What we want is God in us, in what we are. The religion that craves miracles is a religion that seeks a sign outside itself because it lacks assurance in itself. If it knew God in itself by faith, and itself in God in hope, it would ask no proof outside of that. Our Lord's own religion was one not of outward sign but of inward reality. He demanded to

be received for the substance, Himself — and not for the accidents, His miracles.

Without going too much at length into the meaning of the third temptation, I would offer the following suggestions for its interpretation. Our Lord had His own way of entering into the authority and glory of His Messianic kingdom. When the hour for it was come, He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee! And God glorified Him as He glorified God, in, we may be sure, the divinest way, the way of Gethsemane and Calvary. A few months before, when Jesus was beginning to prepare His disciples for the way in which He was to be glorified, Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from thee Lord; this shall never be unto thee. But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men. If it was a temptation of Satan to shrink from entering upon His kingdom in the divine way, surely it was Satan himself in the human temptation that assailed Him to establish that kingdom in just the opposite way, upon the principles not of love and service and sacrifice, but of pride and ambition and earthly self-exaltation. To surrender one's soul to such motives as these is to fall down and worship Satan. Pride, or the worship of Self, is the subtlest, the first and the last, of human temptations. Even when one has given oneself in faith and hope to God, it creeps in in spiritual form to poison and corrupt the joy and exaltation that

belong of right to these. Jesus could recognize and accept the glory which is the reward of spiritual victory, and in that moment detect and exclude every trace of self-seeking or self-exaltation. He could perfectly lose Himself in the act in which He most perfectly found Himself. The only true humility is that of perfect love. One can lose oneself only in preoccupation with that in others which takes and fills the place of self. The power to do this, which is the triumph of divine love, is the only secret of putting behind that opposite spirit which is of the devil.

Thus the issue of the three temptations was the decisive, though not yet the final and complete, victory of the three great principles which are the spiritual foundations of the kingdom of God — Faith, Hope, Love. As they were the constituents of our Lord's own divine human life, so are they the constituents of that selfsame life as He imparts it to us by His spirit in us.

III

THE DIVINE SONSHIP OF HUMANITY

As we have seen that the realization of a divine sonship, not so much in human nature as in human life, was the end and achievement of the earthly life of Jesus, it may be well to delay a little upon the attempt to see more exactly what that sonship signifies. And it may be as well to put the question in the form suggested above: Are we to find the divine sonship made so much of by our Lord in a fact of nature or in an act of life? It is an old and familiar issue among us: Did Jesus Christ find man son of God, or did He make him so? When we are baptized into Christ, are we thereby only declared to be, or are we thereby made, children of God? I shall not so much undertake to decide between these two views as attempt to state the truth of both. But we must admit at once that, on the surface at least, the stress of the New Testament and the Church is much more on the second view than on the first. They seem to make little of the natural sonship and much of the spiritual, the communicated or acquired. Our sonship originated with and dates from Christ. It exists only in Him, and can be ours only as we are in Him, by the grace of God upon us and the grace of God in us. We can find the

explanation of this only, I think, in an analysis of the fact and meaning of sonship in general.

What then do we mean by sonship, word or thing? All through nature life reproduces itself; like begets like. But we do not apply the terms father and son to vegetable or animal relationships of begetter and begotten. In their case the relation is only a natural one in which themselves have no part, — for the reason that, in the true sense, they have no selves. In the case of even the higher animals that which is begotten is like that which begot it by the sole fact of its begetting, though it should never know its parent or any member of its species. But a man is not a man, in what is distinctive of man, by being merely born of man. He would never become man apart from, or except through, subsequent personal association with man. What essentially differences man from the brute, what according to Aristotle constitutes his higher and distinctive part, actually comes to him not by physical birth but by personal association. I say actually, not of course potentially. But whatever of spiritual or personal potentiality a human being inherits by birth is as though it were not until it is elicited by the second birth of intercommunication and association. It is born not of blood but of intelligence and affection and will and self-activity. So we may say that in that which truly constitutes it, that which separates it from mere vegetable and animal generation, sonship is a personal and not a physical relationship. It comes through knowing and realizing itself. Of course we may say that it could not know itself if it did not already

exist. And in this is the truth of the natural sonship. But when we endeavour to fix the true meaning and content of sonship we find that that mere potential existence is actual and practical non-existence.

The clearest statement of the matter seems to me to be afforded by Aristotle's account of virtue. No man is virtuous by nature, for the simple reason that virtue is not a natural but a personal quality. It is not virtue except in so far as it has come through oneself, consciously, voluntarily, and of choice. Yet virtue is the most natural thing in the world, and vice the most unnatural. Virtue is the fulfilment of our nature, — but it is *our* fulfilment of it, and it does not really exist prior to our act and activity in its production. Nature constitutes us — not virtuous, but to become so, to make ourselves so. And it so constitutes us by making us persons, by endowing us with reason to know and will to act of ourselves. Just so it is with our sonship to God. What is natural in it is a mere potentiality which, actually and practically, is equivalent to non-existence. It is of course no small thing that we are by nature endowed with spiritual and personal potentialities; that is the condition of all else we may be or become. Yes, but it is only the condition, — out of which we may become all sorts of opposites and contradictories. The potentiality to be virtuous or to be children of God is equally the potentiality to be vicious and children of the devil. Shall we say that we are these too by nature? If it is more natural to be child of God than of the devil, that can only mean that in ourselves becoming the one we will more perfectly realize ourselves

than in becoming the other; that in fact one is our doing and the other our undoing. But the being one or the other is act of ourselves and not fact of our nature.

In the case of our Lord's own human-divine sonship, the stress in the Gospels is laid not upon the natural but upon the spiritual part or side of it. He is son because He knows and realizes His sonship. The divine recognition at His baptism is a recognition not of what He was potentially by His birth, but of what He was, and had humanly become, in His life. God was well pleased with Him. That was no commendation of any mere fact of nature, human or divine. It was satisfaction with His human life, with what He had grown to be under all the conditions and circumstances of His earthly preparation. And when Christianity came finally to appraise and define the divine sonship revealed in Him, that which it saw in Him was no fact of mere nature, but the act of His militant and triumphant life. It saw and recognized and placed His sonship in the perfection of His holiness and the victory of His life. He was Son, perfected forevermore by the things He had suffered. He was the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead.

The impression that Jesus speaks habitually of the universal, and therefore natural, fatherhood of God I have no disposition to deny or to minimize. But even that must be modified by the fact that for the most part those to whom He speaks of their heavenly Father are those whom He is addressing as disciples. And on the other hand, our Lord says very little di-

rectly of men in general as sons or children of God. Rather He urges us so to be and act that we may *become* sons or children of God. He promises those who are of the spirit of God that they shall be called sons of God. And He even speaks in one place of the holy dead as sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

The disposition of a school not merely of thought but of very deep and active life in the Church to bring forward and emphasize the natural divine sonship of all men, I not only sympathize with but share. But I do so because I see in it more — or, rather, more because I see in it — an evangelical spirit than a natural fact or truth. It is a truth in Jesus rather than in nature. What is primarily manifested to us in Jesus Christ is God's essential disposition, and therefore His eternal purpose, towards mankind. We see that purpose not only expressed, but, as we believe, realized for us in the person of Jesus Christ. Whom God foreknew He foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. So deep a hold has this divine disposition and its operation in the world taken upon us through the Gospel of Jesus Christ that it seems to us now almost a natural fact, and we wish all men to see it so, and so make it so. The fact is, however, that all men are sons of God — not by nature but by grace. Provision is so made in the love and grace and fellowship of God, which means in Jesus Christ, that all men shall be sons of God, that we say that in Him all men have been made and therefore are sons of God. And so we tell all men that they are sons of God and have only to

realize in order to make it so. What first came to us as a revelation of grace in Christ has become so part of us that we now hold and proclaim it as a fact of nature prior to Christ.

It is hardly possible to stop here and not go on into a later stage of Gospel representation. We have in what has been said so far, and in which we have not gone beyond the proper limits of the Synoptics, the ground of reality in the divine sonship realized in humanity by Jesus Christ upon which the later developed truth of regeneration, the necessity of a new birth from above, securely rests. We have seen that even earthly sonship is not a mere physical fact, but is the product of a second birth, the birth of *the idea* in the mind and the heart and the life. It is the truth and the spirit in the person and not the fact in the nature that constitutes it. We might say that it is born not of the immanental natural nexus but of transcendental personal association and relationship. So still more is it with the divine fatherhood and sonship. The relation is one still less of physical fact and more of spiritual act. It is the birth of an idea, which is a divine truth and reality, in the mind and the life. And so we say that divine sonship is born of the Word and the Spirit, the Word being the objective divine expression to us of the truth of sonship, and the Spirit the subjective divine realization in us of the fact of sonship. We could not have been born of God in the sense of the new life of humanity in Jesus Christ without a divine revelation. By which I mean a — not immanental but transcendental — communication from

without, from above, of a Word and a Spirit, a Truth, and a Grace to appropriate it. We are begotten again not of corruptible seed, not of blood, but of incorruptible, through the word of God which liveth and abideth. Jesus Christ Himself is the revelation, the communication from above of the Truth and the Grace by which, objectively to us and subjectively in us, the eternal life of God is made ours.

What I have described as a mere potentiality of sonship, in which our natural relation to God consists, St. Paul treats as a foreordination or predestination to sonship. Of course a predestination of God is a predestination of nature. What we are to be in the end it must have been our nature in the beginning to become; according to the saying of Aristotle, that What a thing shall be when its becoming has been completed, *that* we call the nature of the thing. But there is this difference, that according to the Gospel of Christianity the end of humanity is not by immanental completion from within, what we might call natural evolution, but by transcendental addition from without. We acquiesce in an absolute immanental evolution of things but not of persons, because just the distinction of a person from a thing consists in its power to be in a relation of objective, transcendental, relative independence of evolution. What else are consciousness and freedom and personality? How else are there such facts as transgression and sin, and by conquest of these holiness and righteousness? Humanity was predestinated in the fulness of time to something more than natural relation to God, — viz., to personal asso-

ciation with God. And in this association and intercourse, in objective union and communion with God, it was to find its completion. But if in the nature of things man was to communicate with God objectively, it was in the nature of things that God should communicate with man objectively. There must be the descent of Word and Spirit from above, if there was to be the answer and ascent of faith and spirituality from below. Christianity knows God, not where it cannot know Him, in His remoteness in Himself, but where and as alone it can know Him, in His Word of revelation to it and in His Spirit of participation and fellowship with it. And so man was foreordained unto sonship to God through Jesus Christ; not by operation or in course of nature, but by personal act of himself, — by act of himself in conjunction with the act of God making him son through Jesus Christ. In the birth from above there is an act of generation and an act of conception. The generation is by the Word which is the sperma or seed, the conception is by the Spirit which enables us to receive the Word. In other words, the Word is the principle of objective divine revelation, the Spirit that of subjective human appropriation. The Word *aptat Deum homini*, the Spirit *aptat hominem Deo*. And so is accomplished the uniting into one of the life of God and the life of man.

We have gone far ahead of the representation to which we were to limit ourselves in this first part, and I return to ask how much of the truth, we may say the philosophy, of all this is to be found already in the bare

fact of the realized divine sonship of Jesus in His earthly life. That life viewed in its most pronounced and acknowledged humanity was far more than humanity. And what more there was in it, as we think and believe, the perfection of the divine spirit, the divine nature, the divine life — how was it there? Not by consequence of any metaphysical truth or fact as to His nature or person, but by life-long act and attitude of Himself humanly towards a corresponding eternal divine act and attitude towards Him as son of man. The divine fatherhood was perfected in His sonship by the fact that His sonship perfectly conceived and realized or reproduced the divine fatherhood. When humanity was foreordained to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, that He might be the first-born among many brethren, and when it was called to enter upon and fulfil that divine predestination, what was it called to do? It was, in the first place, to see, what it was impossible for it to see without revelation, the eternally purposed and the eternally accomplished truth of God in man and man in God. And then, it was called to be, what it could never be without the inspiration of divine spirit and power, as perfectly as Jesus Christ is what Jesus Christ is — son of God.

IV

THE SON OF MAN

The more we examine into it and ponder over it, the more important grows the question: Why, among various designations, does Jesus elect so habitually to call Himself by that of Son of man? It cannot be merely because that had been a more or less common title applied to the expected Messiah. It was characteristic of Jesus that He was much more concerned with the realities of the new than with the figures of the old dispensation. We are still too apt to think we understand or have explained the realities of the Gospel when we show that they express and fulfil some figure of the Old Testament. The figure may have adumbrated the fact; the fact too much transcends the figure to be fully explained or adequately interpreted by it. We may understand the Old Testament in the light of its fulfilment in the New. We cannot understand the New in the dim light of its prefiguration in the Old. The Gospel of Jesus Christ can be seen and understood only in the white light of its own utter and independent truth. There was a reason in itself why our Lord selected that term to express or describe Himself.

When we come to examine and compare all the different connections and senses in which Jesus uses or

seems to use the designation Son of man, we do not find the answer to our question so plain or easy. Evidently He means by it to identify Himself in some very deep and universal way with humanity as such. What do we mean by humanity as such? We may adventure a few explanations upon this point.

In the first place, humanity as such means humanity in its simplicity, its reality, its universality. As such, humanity was not known among those who controlled its destinies, by its teachers and its rulers, in the days of our Lord's earthly life. It was buried and lost under a hopeless weight of traditional, conventional, and artificial distinctions and regulations. The institution or the law, social, political, and above all religious, was everything and the man was nothing. Man existed for the established order, not the established order for man. Society, the state, or the church — and they were practically one — was for itself or its official representatives, and man as man, in his relation to it, had ceased to be considered. Now, as between these two, Jesus took His position — not, as we shall see, on the side of the individual against the established order, but — in behalf of humanity against a perverted established order. The Son of man for our sakes became poor; He had not where to lay His head; He took to Himself no special privilege of birth or wealth or class or office. He stood upon His manhood. And the name by which He called Himself expressed that attitude towards existing conditions. Son of man had indeed in Hebrew usage become about synonymous with man, but it carried the little additional force of

man *quâ* man. That which is born of man is man, shares the common nature, is to be defined by the universal predicates. That identification Jesus had taken upon Himself; in that universality, or commonness with all, He knew and named Himself.

But that identification and self-designation had the effect, in the second place, of recognizing and emphasizing the true nature, the dignity and value, of bare manhood as such. There was never a higher vindication and expression of manhood than in the words: The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath. The sabbath, yes, and every other natural or human institution. The great truth grows until it finds its logical utterance in St. Paul's description of the dignity of man in Christ: Let no one glory in men — that is, in human dignities and distinctions. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

The conception of the inherent dignity of humanity, universally recognized as owing so much to the attitude of Jesus Christ towards it, has been abundantly vindicated and illustrated by both modern philosophy and science. Kant first demonstrated the philosophical fact that there can be no "end in itself" which cannot be an end *to* itself. Only that which has "being for self," which can know, feel, possess, enjoy, or value itself, can be an end either to itself or to anything else. If we ask what all evolution is for, there is nothing else in all we can know of evolution *for* which it can be but

man. It cannot be for itself apart from man, because apart from man it has no self for which to be. It is perfectly legitimate to conclude, not only that evolution as known by science has no further task than the further and higher development of the spiritual or personal qualities and destiny of man, but also that if from the beginning there was any end or purpose in evolution at all, that was it. Some such philosophic and scientific cosmical conception as this, we shall see, underlay the entire New Testament interpretation of itself.

In the third place, Son of man in the mouth of Jesus carries with it the idea not only of universal meaning and of inherent dignity, but also of self-realization. The true Son of man is He who has properly conceived and realized His manhood. By assuming to Himself the title Jesus assumes that He has done this. The Son of man is Lord of the sabbath. This He could claim only for Himself individually. He as man was above the sabbath, above the law, above the temple, above every natural or human institution, — why? Because He was the attained and accomplished end for which they were all instituted. There are two errors against which we have very carefully to guard ourselves. The first is the idea that Jesus set Himself against the established order, against outward institutions, as such. He was the furthest from doing this. What He did set Himself against was the sin of an order or an institution, divinely established to serve an end, setting up itself as the end; sacrificing the true end to itself instead of itself to the end; reversing the

divine law by being in this world to be served instead of to serve. He did not object to the visible temple. The zeal of it even ate Him up. What He did object to was that His Father's house which was to have been a house of prayer had been converted into a den of thieves, that men were making merchandise for themselves out of what had been instituted for the service of God. Every ordinance of God was God to Him. He was indignant not at the consecration of means to ends, but at their desecration to other ends or at their blasphemous elevation into ends in themselves. And so the second error against which we need to guard ourselves is the thought that even Jesus in His humanity could have been above the sabbath or above the law any otherwise than through having obeyed and fulfilled them. Nothing can dispense us from the humble and devout use of divine means except the fact of having through their appointed use as means attained the ends for which they were instituted. This was wonderfully illustrated by our Lord's own acts and attitude throughout His life. He submitted to every ordinance of man or God, except when it was possible for Him to honour its spirit only by violating its letter. When He said, Think not that I am come to destroy the law; I am come not to destroy but to fulfil, there was included in that purpose not only the law in any higher sense but the Jewish law in every essential detail. Not only had He been Himself circumcised but He rose above and beyond the fact of outward circumcision only by fulfilling its inward meaning and purpose. So St. Paul and others, although Jews, felt

themselves absolved from the obligation of circumcision, not because it was an outward ordinance, but because in that as in every other respect they felt themselves "fulfilled in Christ; in whom they had been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ." The law of sacrifice was abrogated only through the true sacrifice once for all, in which all the meaning and the truth of sacrifice is forever expressed and fulfilled. Jesus Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, not because there was or is not the need of a law of righteousness, but because He is the righteousness for which the law exists.

In pursuing our reflections upon the senses in which our Lord used the term Son of man or rather perhaps in this case the sentiments or impulses which unconsciously led Him to take it to Himself, we might make a fourth point of the following. Indeed it is involved in what has been already said, and only needs a little more emphasis. Jesus we say was the enemy of all mere formality or conventionality, which was to Him hypocrisy. But it was not the mere hypocrisy that so deeply troubled Him. It was the inhumanity underlying it that moved Him to the depths. They watched Him on a certain occasion to see whether He would heal on the sabbath day; that they might accuse Him. Perceiving their thoughts, He puts to them the direct question, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath day? When they held their peace, He looked round about upon them with anger, and then bade the man stand up and be healed. But his anger was not at their legalism

in making so much of mere outward observance. St. Mark gives a deeper reading of His heart. He was grieved at the hardening of their heart. What man is there of you, He asks, — and there is in the Greek an evident emphasis upon the use of the word man — Who is there among you with the heart of a man, that shall have a sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold upon it and lift it out? How much is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day. It is not hypocrisy but inhumanity that grieves Him; except that all hypocrisy, all unreality, all shallowness or stopping short of the deep meaning and truth of things, is selfishness and inhumanity. Reality is humanity, because it is love and service and sacrifice.

I said, under the third head just above, that our Lord, in taking to Himself the title Son of man, at once identified Himself with all humanity and distinguished Himself from it. He is the truth of it, and so is Lord of all that pertains to its life. When He says, as He does, That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I do not think He is merely claiming for humanity at large the divine right and function of mercy and forgiveness. His words have reference to His own Messianic mission, which was, as we shall see, by the taking or putting away of sin, to bring humanity to God, and so bring it to itself. From the beginning of His ministry of humanity He had exhibited His skill and power to deal with human ills. He began with the ills most in evidence, those of the body. But He was not to

stop with or upon these. His axe was to be laid at the root of all ill. We cannot suppose that the permanent ministry of Christ and of Christianity was to be the immediate healing, without the use of human means, of the physical or natural ills of the world. His ministry began with these because it was only through the diseases of the body that He could reach those of the soul. But His power to heal the former was only a parable of His power to heal the latter. That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins — then saith He to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed and walk. Christianity is humanity, and must therefore deal with all ill that is human. It must even deal in many respects with physical evils before it can touch the springs of spiritual and moral evil. But its real mission and function is to reach and heal the natural through the spiritual and the moral. Its permanent method is to treat causes rather than symptoms. If I should attempt to explain humanly the distinctively human right and power of Jesus to forgive or to take away sin, it would be somewhat on the following lines. The inherent right to represent God depends upon the extent to which we inherently represent Him. If one through perfect actual realization of the divine fatherhood should perfectly realize his own sonship, he would be no longer only a servant in his Father's house. He would be a son, entitled to speak in his father's name and with his father's authority. When the son has reproduced the father's spirit and embodied the father's law, then he has not only authority but commandment and

obligation to express and administer his father's will. In the perfection of His humanity, Jesus Christ was upon this earth as God. And that perhaps is the explanation why, even before His advent, the Messiah of the Old Testament, while always man, is often spoken of in terms of, and interchangeably with, God Himself. There is perhaps a yet deeper truth involved in that of the Son of man. This, namely: That, if God is ever to be spiritually and personally in the world at all, it will be only through the Son of man; that is to say, through the growing divinity of man. It will be consummated when the Son of man shall be Humanity. The divine Father of all can be in all only as all realize or actualize the divine sonship. But the great truth of our Lord's relation to the taking away of sin, and so at-oneing humanity with God, belongs to a later stage of our inquiries.

In the next place, our Lord speaks most pointedly of Himself as Son of man in those connections in which He is foretelling those most human experiences of the trials and afflictions that await Him, and also of His own victory over them, — especially, His death and resurrection. In a certain place (Romans 5: 1–5) St. Paul tells us, in view of what has happened in Christ Jesus, that we ought as Christians to do three things: We ought to be at present peace with God, with whom by faith we see ourselves eternally at one. We ought to rejoice in hope of that actual and entire identification with God which shall be our final glory. And if these two, then ought we also to glory in the tribulations by which He became, and we also shall become,

what He is. There is nothing our Lord so insists upon as the necessary relation of the Son of man to the things He suffered. It became God, we may say reverently that it was necessary for God, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the captain of their salvation through suffering.

And finally, and perhaps most strikingly of all, it is impossible for any criticism to sever our Lord's own conception of Himself as Son of man from the truth in His mind of His second advent, His perpetual coming in the world, and the great final coming to judge the world. It is in metaphysical and logical sequence with all that has gone before, that St. John should represent our Lord as describing the two great functions of the Son of man as giving life, or raising the dead, and executing judgment. He Himself discharges these two functions because He is Son of man. As the divine end of humanity, its truth and reality and therefore its predestination, it belonged to Him not only to have come but to be always coming. It was His right to foresee not only His true coming begin soon after His apparent departure, but His complete coming consummated in a great and universal final Advent. And in the very nature of it His coming is a perpetual and an everlasting act or process of divine judgment. He came not into the world to condemn the world, but to give life to the world. His proper function is life-giving, a life-giving that is both resurrection and regeneration. But if God sent not His Son into the world to judge but only to save it, it cannot but be that His coming is in itself a judgment. He that believeth

on Him is not judged, but he that believeth not is judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that men loved the darkness rather than the light. We cannot get around that reasoning. In some form or other, in some terms or other, it will always be coming home to us. Stripped of all conventional or ecclesiastical language, Jesus Christ means to every human being the truth, the reality, the worth and the blessedness of himself. That is always with him or before him for acceptance or rejection, for realization or ruin. All human life is judgment, which is primarily only separation between those who are and those who are not, those who do and those who do not — what it is appointed for all in life to be and to do. If to live, to be ourselves, to do our part, is approbation, justification, blessedness, what can failure to do these be but reprobation, condemnation, and wretchedness?

The truth that final judgment is to be by the Son of man carries this further thought. Nothing is said in the New Testament of a divine wrath against sinfulness as a universal fact or condition. Nothing is said of a final condemnation of human transgression of the divine law. It is recognized that by nature we cannot but be sinners. It is recognized that our highest devotion to and aspiration after the law of God is weak through our human flesh.

There is infinite pity and compassion, infinite mercy and forgiveness, for sinners. Our Lord, or St. Paul, or St. John after Him, have no condemnation for sin-

ners. All their condemnation is for those who are *not* sinners, who do not know themselves to be such, who do not know in themselves what it is to be such, who will not to be, and will not be, saved from their sin.

V

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Although both John the Baptist and Jesus came in succession preaching in identical terms the kingdom of God, yet they preached it and meant it in a very different spirit. So much so that John to the last found it hard to recognize what he had himself prepared for in his successor. When he sent from his prison to inquire of Jesus whether He were indeed he that should come, or were they to look for another, Jesus answered him with signs of the kingdom, but it is by no means certain that those signs would satisfy John. He was cast in a severer and more legal mould. Jesus, while taking occasion, on the departure of the messengers, to speak in the highest possible terms of John as a prophet and representative of the old dispensation, seems to recognize that he had not been born anew of the spirit, or born into the new spirit, and so after all his preparation for the kingdom of God had not truly seen or entered into the kingdom of God. He was the friend of the bridegroom, who had prepared the bride for the heavenly nuptials, but he did not witness the union. And so Jesus declares that he who within the kingdom of God was least was greater than John.

The kingdom of God must therefore be something

very definite and very positive. And yet from Jesus' own preaching of it we find it very difficult to define it positively. Perhaps in this respect too the kingdom of God was to come "without observation," not in word but in deed, to be seen and judged only in its fruits. We must therefore, as before, collect its meaning and frame our definition of it as best we may from the whole tenor of our Lord's teaching and action.

We might say in general that the kingdom of God is simply and literally what the words express, not anything of God but God Himself in humanity. But if we should agree upon this, we should at once disagree upon what this means. With many it would mean no more than the prevalence and influence within each man of his own subjective conception of God. With others who have more of the sense of God as One with whom we may hold objective relations, the kingdom of God will be an actual presence and operation of God in us, as we say, by His Spirit. And still others may go the whole length of holding the kingdom of God to be that permanent and eternal incarnation of God in humanity which we see not only realized in the individual person of Jesus Christ, but to be consummated in the universal humanity of which He is the head. Leaving then for the present so general a definition as that, let us examine the matter more in detail.

Is it possible that that which was John's stumbling-block in the ministry of Jesus was that it seemed to him to lack positiveness and decision; that there was not enough in it of the Law which he knew, and too much of the Gospel which he could not understand?

John's kingdom was the kingdom of righteousness, Christ's the kingdom of mercy and goodness. There are many evidences of this in the very different attitude of Jesus from that of John in His dealing with the actual sins of actual men and women. One would say from this point of view that the kingdom of God is the spirit of God manifested in Jesus Christ as pure Goodness, — that is to say, as pure love and mercy and forgiveness. This is manifested from the beginning in the impression of Jesus as one who went about doing good; in His profoundly sympathetic response to the appeal of every form of human misery; in His declaration of His mission as Son of man to seek and to save that which was lost; in His consorting with publicans and sinners rather than with the righteous and the rich. And surely as we saw that our Lord's chosen designation was Son of man, so we may say that the essence of His religion was humanity.

We cannot say truly that the kingdom of God is goodness, unless we know clearly what goodness is. Jesus naturally met evil on the outside, and so He addressed Himself first to the evils of the body and of the outward condition. But that was not His end or aim. Missionaries to the slums of a great city or to a crowded foreign heathen population might go first with relief funds and appliances, with hospitals and improved sanitation and healthier and more decent methods of dressing and living. It is Christian to do so because Christianity is humanity wherever or however applied. But humanity that goes no further than that is not Christianity. Christianity is not Christianity until it

is applying its axe to the root of the evil and the wretchedness of the world, until its business is with sin and with God's salvation from sin. It is not the Gospel nor the kingdom of God nor salvation to men that they shall be made the *objects only* of all the mercy and the goodness of the universe. Nothing can be done merely to us or for us that will save us. To be loved, to be sympathized with and helped, to be shown mercy and forgiven, to be the objects of the most unconditional divine grace, are a very great deal. But these are the merest circumstances of human salvation, they are not salvation itself. No one saw more clearly than our Lord that life and blessedness is not in what is done to us, but only in what we ourselves are and do. He did not mean the story of the Prodigal Son to be to us the beginning and the end of the Gospel. At least, He did not unless we include in its teaching not only the perfect and unconditional love and goodness of the father, but, as the consequence, not cause of that, the complete repentance and self-restoration of the son. The goodness of God leadeth us unto repentance. Nothing else can so lead us to repentance or can make repentance so effectual unto salvation; but it is our repentance and what comes of it in ourselves that constitutes and is our salvation. Therefore, Jesus quickly and decisively passes from the consideration of men as the mere recipients or objects of the goodness of God, of which He was the almoner, to the higher thought of them as the subjects of the divine goodness, as partakers and sharers of the divine spirit and nature and life

of love and goodness. The creditor who owed ten thousand talents could by no possibility have discharged the debt, and his lord had compassion on him and freely forgave him all. But when that same servant showed no mercy to the fellow-servant who owed him an hundred pence, what was become of the mercy and goodness that had been shown him? We can be recipients only as we are sharers and dispensers of the grace of God. And that is not an arbitrary condition upon God's part. All that God has to give is, in the nature of it, capable of being received and possessed and enjoyed only as it is used. And it can be used as God uses it only as it is used, not for ourselves, but upon all in the measure of their claim upon us. How otherwise is it possible to have and to employ and to enjoy God's spirit and nature, and life of love and grace and goodness?

All that God has to give us is goodness, because properly understood that is all that God is Himself. And goodness is *ab initio*, not only what we are in ourselves and do of ourselves, but what we are and do to others than ourselves. But there is no exaggerated or impracticable unselfishness or altruism in that. As we have before pointed out, goodness is our own and our only good. A man's true pleasure or happiness or blessedness or good is to be found in the abundance of his life, which means in the abundance of what he is and does. And what can he be or do except in relation and interchange with others, in mutual offices of love and goodness? The whole tenor of our Lord's teaching and example is to the effect that the *res* or matter

of our salvation is not in what God is to us or does for us, but in the result of that upon and in ourselves. It is not the being loved but the loving with a divine love that is our salvation. It is not the receiving but the showing mercy, not our being forgiven but our forgiving, that Jesus Christ is concerned about, not because God is in want of, in the sense of lacking, what we are or can do, but because He knows that that alone is what we want or lack. We do not take sufficient account of the inseparable condition attached to all God's gifts of grace. We can receive freely only what we give freely, and the blessing contained and intended in the gift is to be found by us not in the freely receiving but in the freely using and giving. We need pray to be forgiven our debts only as we forgive our debtors. For if we forgive not, neither does our heavenly Father forgive us. Blessed are they that show mercy, for they shall receive mercy.

The kingdom of God, then, is not a kingdom of goodness as too many of us understand goodness. It is a kingdom not of absolute and unconditioned mercy shown to us, but of divine and therefore unconditioned mercy and goodness exercised by us. In other words, it is a kingdom not only of goodness but of righteousness, or rather of the unity and identity of these. John the Baptist need not have feared that Jesus was going to compromise or relax the law. He was going to magnify it. Except your new righteousness of grace, He was to say to His disciples, shall exceed the old righteousness of law, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. He was not to lower the standard of

personal perfection, but to raise it to its limit in infinity: Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. He was not by what so many of us call goodness to put up with human imperfection, to condone human weakness, to let down the demands of human obligation and responsibility. But He was to effect a higher purpose and accomplish a higher result in the matter of all these, not by the old impossible method of exacting a righteousness that could not be rendered, but by the new and practicable method of imparting a righteousness which could be received, and which could and should be none the less our righteousness because not ours but God's in us. That the spirit that I am now of, the new nature into which I have grown, the life I live by the faith of the Son of God, are all not mine but God's who lives in me, makes them none the less mine who also live in God.

The point is that the desire to make the Gospel a gospel of goodness, so called, shown to us, and not of righteousness to the utmost required of us, is the completest possible travesty and contradiction of goodness. The world is slowly educating up to the point of seeing that the worst unkindness to a rational and free personality is the kindness of ministering a natural or physical good at the expense to him of moral or spiritual, by which we mean personal, good. A man's life is not in the abundance of the things he possesses, but in himself. If in increasing his possessions we diminish him, we have wrought him the worst injury in our power. The highest mercy to a man is to spare him no requirement of his own manhood. God spared not His own

Son, but gave Him up to all that earth or hell could do against Him. To have spared Him whatsoever of His humiliation would have been to rob Him of just so much of His exaltation. The kingdom of God, then, is not weakness. It is no weakness in God, no lowering of His demand upon us to return to Him with the usury of actuality all that He has committed to us in potentiality, no sparing us any jot or tittle of the labor or the pain that, if we are to be made at all, must of necessity go to the making of us. And therefore, equally, it is no weakness for us. So far from God's purpose in Christ being to do anything for us or instead of us which therefore we are not to do ourselves, it is a call to us to be all, to do all, and to suffer all that Jesus Christ Himself is, did, or suffered. If we are to be near Him in His kingdom, we must have drunk the cup that He drank and been baptized with the baptism that He was baptized withal. We must have died the death He died and attained the resurrection that He accomplished.

The story of the Prodigal Son may be used to illustrate the whole method of the kingdom of God. We will confine ourselves to the most general application of it as giving an account of the return, reconciliation, and restoration of the soul that has been far separated from God by sin. The thing to be illustrated is not a material separation or one of outward space and condition. It is an alienation, a drifting apart, of mind and character and life, a long widening and far widened breach of spiritual sympathy and personal unity. What the son is brought to and experiences in the far

country is not the straits and discomforts of physical poverty, but the inherent consequences, the evil and the wretchedness, of sin. Sin is an evil not only spiritual and moral but also natural; and what he felt first was doubtless the natural ills into which he had sunk. But whatever he wished, what he wanted was not relief merely from these. The story would never have been told if its end had been restoration only to that. The restoration was not to outward conditions but to himself, and that through reconciliation or spiritual at-one-ment with the father and the home. How was that internal and essential reunion to be accomplished? The natural first answer would be through the self-reformation and conversion of the son. The change away having been his alone, the change back must be equally his own. Certainly, the father alone could not effect the reconciliation, whatever might be his disposition. In the thing to be illustrated, what is wanted is the change or conversion of the son himself. But suppose that, as is the case, such a spiritual self-restoration is a natural and a moral impossibility. That can only mean that salvation is an impossibility. And so it is, of the son and by the son himself. If it is to be accomplished it must be by the father and the son in co-operation. And that co-operation must depend upon a personal attitude or disposition towards it on both sides. On the part of the son it is not amiss that the most outward experiences of the wretched consequences of his sin should first awake his consciousness of loss and want. But the matter would not go far if that did not lead further,

to remorse and repentance and the desire not only to restore his condition but to recover himself. This in turn could not but lead to the consciousness that as it was he who had sinned, so it must be he who should put away his sin. The obligation of his own part in the matter surely could not be felt too strongly. The law must press its claims, and he must feel those claims to the very uttermost. It is only after he has tested to the limit the possibilities of the law, or his own possibilities under the law — that is to say, after he has fully proved his own will to save himself — that he is prepared for further and other conditions of salvation. In the case of our heavenly Father we do not know how far His providence and prevenient grace is operative in our own least and earliest part in the process, but certainly our part must be there. We must have felt the law and tested our own will and strength to obey it before His grace can intervene. When we have come, or have been brought — or properly, *both* — to that point, then may be revealed to us the beginnings of His part in the matter. I say *then*, for nothing can be revealed to us until we are prepared to apprehend and receive it. The philosophy of God's part may be expressed by a return to the illustration of the parable. What could never have come to the son through the law of himself can and does come to him in the end through the grace of the father. Taken back at once and completely, just as he was, into his father's heart and home, all his sin and shame as though it was not and had never been, himself in the best robe and with the ring of perfect not only reconciliation but eternal

union upon his hand, treated as though he were already all that his father's son should be, what effect would all that love and grace, all that fulness of fellowship and that atmosphere of goodness, have upon the son? It would deepen his remorse and increase his penitence, but it would go far beyond that. The perfect faith and trust in the father's restoration of him to sonship would give him heart for and hope in his own inner restoration to sonship. The objective fact would create the subjective spirit, and day by day he would not only be in faith and hope, but be becoming in spirit and reality, more and more the son of his father.

If such is the rationale of the only possible true reconciliation and restoration to union of earthly father and son, why shall it not be the true image and shadow of the reconciliation we so sorely need with our Father in heaven? To come back to Him is to come back to our real selves. But however, eternally complete in Him are all the conditions for our return; however our sin has quenched none of His love, nor abated aught of the readiness or the sufficiency of His grace; however He waits to receive us back into full fellowship with Himself and to make our sins as though they had never been, — still even He can go no further unless there be in us the will and the purpose to arise and come to Him, not alone for the betterment of our state, but for the complete and perfect moral, spiritual, and personal union and oneness with Him of ourselves.

VI

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

The characteristic of our Lord's ministry which made the most immediate and left the most permanent impression was the principle or quality of authority. It is not only that it was perforce conceded to Him by others, but that He unqualifiedly assumed it for Himself. The two aspects in which this authority presents itself to us might be distinguished as the authority of truth and the authority of power.

The authority of our Lord's teaching might be described as that of originality and finality. The originality was the more apparent and striking because it was in such complete contrast with the very principle of all teaching that had gone before. The principle of that teaching had been that of an unquestioned and unquestionable external authority, the authority originally of God speaking from heaven, and then of a long accumulating and consolidating body of traditional exposition and interpretation scarcely less authoritative or irreformable. Instead of that the truth itself was present and spoke for itself in Jesus, and He spoke immediately and directly from Himself as being or embodying the truth. The question arises in studying the Sermon on the Mount, for example, In what

capacity, as being Who or What, does Jesus utter that great body of truth? Is He speaking there as God, and with the outward infallible authority of a proclamation from heaven? Or on the other extreme, is it only the highest reach and utterance of wisdom in the heart and from the lips of an earthly sage? On the face of the evidence of the utterance itself, and in the absence of any explanation on our Lord's own part of the authority by which He spake, I would give the following at least provisional and temporary answer. On the one side this teaching cannot and will not interpret itself as the tentative and incomplete wisdom of human reason and conscience so far as they have attained. On the other side, whatever its ultimate source, it does not come to us out of the mouth of Jesus with the immediate or unmediated force of an utterance from heaven. Jesus Christ speaks to us simply in the capacity and with the authority of the inherent and essential truth of the things He says. I speak that I do know, and testify that I have seen, — that is all the authority He will give us. No matter whence or how the truth, the authority of the truth is that it is the truth. Of course our Lord does say always, My truth is not mine but His that sent me, — but what authority had He for saying that, or what proof could He give of it? At the last the only authority lay in the fact of its *being* the truth, and all the proof simply in the power of the truth to prove itself. I repeat, then, that the immediate capacity in which Jesus Christ taught was that of the truth which He taught. That was the truth, whether divine or human or both, but the whole actual

truth of humanity, of human existence, human life, human destiny. He was Himself that truth — incarnate, personal, consummated. And He was not only the truth consummated, but the consummation or consummating of the truth; not only the truth and life of humanity, but the process or way by which humanity comes to the knowledge of its truth and attains to the living of its life.

The truth for which Jesus Christ stands is distinctly and definitely the truth of man, of human life. And when He says of it, I speak that I do know and testify that I have seen, He means that what He says of it is matter of His own personal human experience. He has Himself been through the whole of human experience, and is competent to testify as a witness to all that is in it. He knew what was in man, because He was Himself all of man. The fact that from the first opening of His mouth as a teacher Jesus speaks with the authority of perfect truth does not contradict the fact that He had humanly learned the truth. Almost the first step, for example, in His public ministry was to set Himself outside of and in opposition to the whole spirit and principle and method of the religion in which He was born. Shall we not suppose that the grounds of that opposition had been accumulating and the form of it taking shape in His heart and mind long before His public attitude was assumed? At twelve He was deeply interested and concerned with what was going on in the temple, and during the eighteen intervening years He was doubtless more than an annual visitor to what in His conception was, or ought

to be, the holy city. If He held His peace outwardly during that time, what was going on within? And so not only with part but with the whole of the wisdom with which He spoke and acted, we shall doubtless have to go further in seeking a reason for its being so far beyond the attainment of all other human experience, but we need not on that account deny it to be the fruit and result of a true human experience.

The difficulties multiply upon us when we pass from the authority of truth to that of power on the part of our Lord. What is this? A new teaching! — they exclaimed on His first public appearance, according to St. Mark. But it is something more than a new teaching, — for, With authority He commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him. Unquestionably, Jesus was accepted as having power not only over the spiritual and physical ills of human nature, but over disorders even of external nature. With regard to many of the difficulties involved here, we may, so far as our purpose is concerned, quickly dispose of them. The fact or facts, for example, of demoniacal possessions; the commentators do not hesitate to say now of the possessed that one was an epileptic and another a madman. To Jesus they were possessed of demons. What of that? If Jesus Christ, in all the human and divine truth of Him, whatever that be, were come to-day instead of two thousand years ago, would He not speak and think in terms of human thought and knowledge and speech of to-day? If not, then what? In terms of the thought and speech of men two thousand years hence? And if He should think

the thoughts and speak in terms of the science of to-day, would there not be the same difficulties two thousand years hence that we have with the thoughts and speech of two thousand years ago? The abiding truth of Jesus Christ is within and behind and wholly independent of the ever changing phases or stages of human knowledge. The setting has from time to time to be altered to adapt it to the changing focus or vision of advancing science, but what is really of the jewel within does not change with it; it is Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

We have to meet fairly and frankly the fact that the very conception of miracle is a real and a growing stumbling-block to the thought, and I may say the conscience, of to-day. We have to take account of this prejudice, and do it the justice to understand it. We may say that it is due, first, to the world's growing observation and experience of the inviolability and uniformity of natural law. With that growth miracle has gradually disappeared, not, assuredly, because facts have changed, but because our understanding and interpretation of facts have changed. We assume that if we understood all facts, all facts would appear to us natural. But, secondly, with that change another has followed, or is following, more slowly. We have learned or are learning to see God less and less in transcendences of nature, and more and more in the perfect unity and order and wisdom of nature. We feel that the whole work of God is one and of a piece, that addition or interference or reparation from without would be a confession of imperfection or failure. The

natural has become to us more divine than the non-natural or the contra-natural. But more than that, in the third place, — we ought long ago to have been sensible of the positive injury that has come to the world through the misapprehension that the true supernatural is a condemnation or in any respect whatever a supplanting or displacing of the natural. The true supernatural is only the truer and higher natural. It is God not without but within the natural, helping us not to discard but to realize or fulfil the natural, on the lines of its own truer because higher and completer nature. The life of Jesus Christ, because it is higher than nature can carry us, or than we can carry ourselves in our own fulfilment of the law of nature, is not therefore contrary to nature. It is our own highest nature — and that alone is the true supernatural — not to be completed by nature, nor to be able of ourselves to fulfil the law of self-completion, but to find the completion at once of our nature and ourselves in highest union and association with God. The world still wants miracle in its Christianity, to the untold damage of itself and the utter contradiction of Christianity. Was it better that the earth should be gradually delivered from the curse of plague and pestilence by science and sanitation, by the natural process of self-cleansing and sweetening, or that in the stead of that the old so-called Christian method of miracle in response to prayer and fasting should have sufficed, and saved the trouble and expense of the cleansing and the sweetening? And so, in the mass or with the individual, there are natural causes of natural ills which

are best dealt with only by natural science, which is the knowledge of natural causes, and by natural art, which is the acquired skill to apply that knowledge. Anything that could and did supplant the necessity for science and art would be destructive of a very large part of human life, and would be a direct contradiction of Him who came that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

The injury that comes to us from the unwholesome demand for miracle is more apparent as well as more real in our inner than in our outer life. Christianity ought to be not only the most spiritual but the most natural life in the world. The life of faith in God ought to be the life of the highest activity of ourselves, and of the completest fulfilment not only of every potentiality, but every relation and obligation of our nature and our natural condition. But there is a not undeserved charge against Christians of weakness, as compared with the more positive and active life of the world. And then comes the charge against Christianity itself, that it weakens the character through relieving the man of the responsibility and the task of self-realization, of working out his own salvation. His life-work has been done for him or instead of him, and "he is contented to be a sinner saved by grace." Is it not true that we are constantly expecting miracle to be wrought in our behalf, that we are looking to God to have done for us or to do in us that the whole benefit of which consists in our doing ourselves? No, Christ is our salvation only because He is the power of God in us to work out our own salvation. If instead of

being that, He were instead of that to us, He would be not our salvation but its opposite. Now miracle is something instead of nature and instead of ourselves, whereas the Christianity of Jesus Christ is what we see in Himself, God indeed and the power of God, but God so in nature and so in man that it only completes the nature and perfects the man. There is no Holy Ghost in me save as the spirit that I myself am of, and there is no Christ in me save in what I am myself. And if God be truly in me by His Word and His Spirit, He is so not to supplant or to displace my nature or my personality, but only to complete them on their own lines and perfect them in their own activities. We can see, then, how there may be some ground of prejudice against the conception of miracles, at least as we have misunderstood and abused it.

Yet there can be no doubt that Jesus possessed the extraordinary powers ascribed to Him and performed the works we call miracles. There is less and less disposition to deny that, the more apparent it becomes that there are psychic and spiritual forces as yet latent in human nature of which we know not whereunto the future development may reach. Such powers were existent and manifested themselves in our Lord's time, and, like all other human powers, for evil as well as for good. The devil as well as God could make use of them. It is not inconceivable nor perhaps improbable that there may be a spiritual and divine use for those powers, of which our Lord gave us the highest indication, of which we have not as yet made true experiment, and therefore have not true experience. Assuredly,

there is more to be accomplished than our religion or our science have accomplished for the spiritual and the natural ills of mankind through the mind and through the faith of men. On the part of religion, may it not be from a lack of mental and spiritual susceptibility on our part, the absence of a due response of mind and heart, that the truth and the love of God do not work greater wonders in our lives, not only spiritual and moral but physical also? May it not be one more of the many reproaches of our Christianity as it is, that many have to go outside, if not of it, yet of its organized fellowship, to find that power of God unto salvation of soul and body which was its promise to us? Whatsoever lies dormant in us of natural potentiality to be found and healed in soul or body by truth and love acting directly upon mind and heart, let it by all means be awakened and developed. It will not militate against, but rather will work with, the true principle that God's grace and power must work in and with and through ourselves and our own activities, and not simply for or instead of us.

Let us see how our Lord Himself regarded His wonderful powers. Unquestionably, in a very large sense, He considered Himself to be in the world as a divine physician of the ills and the sicknesses that are in it. In how large a sense, I think we can only begin to realize in our later interpretations of His work and person. I believe, as I have said, that our Lord's permanent function was to treat causes, or the cause, and not symptoms; and symptoms only indirectly, as they could be temporarily alleviated, and would be ultimately

removed by the removal of the cause. In other words, He came to take away sin, and by consequence all the consequences of sin. But at the first He needed to produce an adequate impression upon the hearts and minds of men of not only His disposition and mission but also of His authority and power to be the divine helper and healer. Of this there was no doubt or question in His own mind, and it imparted to Him that aspect of authority which took away all doubt or question from the minds of those who were the subjects of His power. They *were* the subjects, and not merely the objects, of His power. He carried *them* along with Himself in their healing. On their part it was mind or heart or faith healing. He told them to be well, to arise and walk, to look up and see. And they did it. Could not we in many ways do it too, if only we would believe and know? What we have, first and perhaps chiefly, to note in connection with our Lord's miracles is the way in which He Himself deprecated the element in them of mere sign or wonder. With Him they were simply parts of His mission and power to help and heal. St. Matthew describes them as fulfilling the prophecy, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases. And ever as He wrought them there are evidences that all this dealing with outward conditions is but preliminary to a further and a higher aim. The miracles are but parables; the power to heal sickness is but proof of the power to heal sin. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power to forgive sins (then saith He to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house. And he arose and departed to his house.

There are other miracles that it would be more difficult to give a reason for or attempt an explanation of; such, for example, as His mysterious sympathy with and power over the operations of nature. However that is to be accounted for, or disposed of, our ignorance need not seriously concern us. At any rate it symbolizes to us this great truth: The more we are at one and are one with God, the more are we so with everything else within and without us, and the more — as we shall perhaps know in the future — have we the sympathy and co-operation not only of our whole selves but of all nature around us.

We were brought just above face to face with our Lord's authority and power to deal with sin. The further question of that must be reserved for our second part, upon the interpretation of His work. Another larger claim, to be similarly reserved, is expressed at the close of St. Matthew's Gospel: All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. But even these are not yet all the ascriptions to Jesus, or the claims by Him of that *exousia*, that divine prerogative, which we have so far only partially traced through the Gospels. In our Lord's last address to His Father, before leaving the world, according to St. John, He speaks thus: Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee: even as thou gavest Him authority

over all flesh, that whatsoever thou hast given Him, to them He should give eternal life. And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ. The eternal life which He describes as His authority and power to impart are spoken of at length as being possessed here on earth; but He goes on to pray, Father, that which thou hast given me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with me; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

When we come to interpret these later claims of divine authority, I shall endeavour to show that, while they go beyond the earlier ones we have been considering, and project themselves into all the future of human life, not only here but hereafter, yet they are all, the earliest and the latest, precisely along the same lines and mean the same thing.

VII

THE BLESSEDNESS OF JESUS

A STUDY of the beatitudes will give us the highest illustration possible of the leading principles of what we have been discussing as the gospel of the common humanity and the earthly life of our Lord. Blessedness is the highest expression as it is the highest reach and attainment of that life. The life of Jesus would not be a gospel to us if it were not a revelation and a promise of human blessedness. We see in Him the meaning, the value, the worth, which not only justifies to us and reconciles us to our life and its conditions as they are, but enables us to find in it the highest satisfaction of which our natures are capable and the highest enjoyment to which our spirits or personalities can attain. We have already seen that while personal pleasure or happiness or even blessedness can never be the motive, it is in fact the measure and the condition, of the highest activity. Mere instinct or mere duty can never lift us to our height. In the first place, perfect functioning or activity *is* perfect pleasure or happiness or blessedness, as the function is particular, general, or universal, and is lower or higher in the scale. And, secondly, as the perfection of the activity heightens the pleasure, so reflexively the perfection of the pleasure

is necessary to the complete heightening of the function or activity. We can be or do perfectly only that which we supremely love, and which therefore it is our supreme pleasure, happiness or blessedness, as the case may be, to be or to do. Blessedness, therefore, let us repeat, is at once the measure and the condition of the perfect life. Aristotle states the principle somewhat as follows: Pleasure, he says, speaking of even the lower true pleasures, completes a function in two senses. In the first place, it *is* its completion; like the bloom on the peach or the cheek, it is the final touch which marks the acme of the act or activity. In the second place, it *causes* its completion, by infusing into the act or activity that without which it cannot complete itself. When, therefore, our Lord comes to speak of blessedness, He is describing His own life, and the life that should be ours, in its very fulness and completeness.

The first question is as to the fact, actual or possible, in human life as it is, of such a blessedness. Our Lord's testimony is to the fact of its actuality, and therefore of its possibility. And let us pause to observe that it is testimony on His part. It is not the immediate revelation of omniscience, but the witness of human experience. He knew that there is a blessedness in human life, because He had found it and was in possession of it. He spoke in the name and with the authority of it, and He declared it that others might seek and find and have part with Him in it. The beatitudes are the revelation of His own humanly discovered and humanly experienced secret of blessedness. There is not one of the human conditions or causes of

it which He gives that He had not Himself tested and proved to the utmost. There is not one of the ingredients in the cup of it that He had not drunk to the bottom. It is true here as always, that He spake that He Himself knew and testified to that He Himself had experienced. He had known the poverty which is the condition of the kingdom of heaven, the sorrow without which one cannot experience the divine consolations, the meekness through which He was destined to inherit the earth; He had hungered and thirsted for righteousness and been filled; He had known the mercy to others which is the only mercy to ourselves; through the purity of His human heart He had seen God; in His perfect ministry of peace with God and peace among men He had reached the acme of human attainment, and tested what it is not only to be called but to be the Son of God. He had known, too, and experienced the blessedness of, persecution and reproach and false witness and rejection.

As all the causes and conditions so all the rewards and enjoyments of this blessedness are described by our Lord as to be found within this present life. Blessed are — not shall be hereafter — those of whom He is speaking. For theirs is — not shall be — the kingdom of God and its rewards. Even where He speaks in the future, as He continues to do, it is evident that He is speaking of cause and effect here and not hereafter. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. No chastening or affliction is at the moment joyous; it is only afterward that it yieldeth peaceable fruit. But afterward, in time; if we cannot reap it in

time, there is no assurance that we can do so in eternity. St. Paul thanks God that the afflictions of Christ had abounded upon him, not only because thereby he had come to know for himself the comfort that aboundeth through Christ, but because he was thus enabled to comfort others with the comfort wherewith he was himself comforted of God.

Nothing assuredly better than a blessedness that begins in poverty and sorrow, and has its earthly end in persecution, could illustrate the great truth that the issues of the kingdom of God are within ourselves, that it is the energies and activities of our own souls in which the abundance of our life consists, and which therefore control, or determine and constitute, our happiness. It cannot be too often repeated that it is not environment but our own reaction upon environment that blesses or curses us. The same environment is equally calculated to make and to mar opposite responses to it. Identical conditions produce the hero and the coward. The career of Jesus Christ so far as it is a revelation to us from God, or so far as it is a demonstration to us of a fact in itself, reveals and demonstrates to us this truth: that human conditions rightly interpreted and rightly acted upon are the best conditions for the production of a divine human life and blessedness.

If we wish to go more into the details of the blessedness of Jesus, we must analyze the separate beatitudes, and this we shall proceed to do with at least one or more of them. In the two most definite statements by our Lord of the nature and purpose of His earthly mission, the opening address at Nazareth and the reply

to John in prison, He repeats an expression which is the keynote of His ministry: He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; and, The poor have the gospel preached unto them. As the Gospel to the Poor was the divine commission, so was it the human credential of His Messiahship. Who are the poor? Are they the secularly or earthly poor, or the spiritually and heavenly poor? It is a mixed question in the Gospels, just as we have seen that it is an open question whether our Lord's actual ministry was one of general humanity or for the specific taking away of sin. If we read the whole of the two passages quoted from above, we shall see that all the Messianic functions — release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, liberty to the bruised; or, The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up — are such as, while they have their material prototypes, may be interpreted as spiritual only, the material becoming mere figure or symbol of the spiritual. We have seen how Jesus Himself strives always to bend the lower to the higher, and the fact that while in St. Luke He speaks of the blessedness of the poor in general, in St. Matthew He limits the expression to Blessed are the poor in spirit, or the spiritually poor, may be only another instance of His desire gradually to spiritualize His mission.

We limit our question, then, to Who are the poor in spirit? Several lines of answer tempt us in different, and perhaps all of them true, directions; the deepest truths are the most many-sided. But let us begin at least by looking for our Lord's own interpretation.

The saying must be taken in connection with many others, such as these: They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick; I am not come to call —to extend the gracious divine invitation to enter the kingdom to — the righteous, but sinners; I am come that they that see not may see. They that are whole, they that say they see, they that are already righteous, or think they are, are not objects because they are incapable of being subjects of His mission. The blessing of the kingdom is not for them, because they cannot know the blessedness of it. Perhaps the strongest expression of the state of mind that shuts out from the blessedness of Jesus is to be found in the words, Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mightest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see.

No doubt the above covers briefly the general ground of the practical application of the first beatitude, so far at least as the first condition of blessedness is concerned. It does not touch the second point involved, the content of the blessing attached. But so far as we have gone, may we not attempt to go a little deeper and touch the philosophy that underlies all the divine teaching? Jesus Christ seems to attach a blessedness not alone to our consciousness of the fact, but to the fact itself, of our natural, or in ourselves, poverty and

blindness and sin and death. In the first place, does He not at least exaggerate our natural condition? And if He does not, then how, in the second place, can He consistently call it blessed? It seems to me that the reason of both positions may be made apparent. The religion of Christianity rests on two facts, the one of our nature and the other of ourselves. The first is the deficiency of our nature, and the second is the insufficiency of ourselves. With regard to the first, Bishop Butler teaches us in substance somewhat as follows: We are, as constituted by our nature, deficient beings. That is, in order to be complete, we need ourselves to supplement or add something to our nature. The deficiency is to be supplied by the addition of what we call habit. Habit, which results from our own acts, and forms our own character, and determines our own destiny, is thus something which we ourselves add to our nature, and which as we thus add it becomes a second nature which is only an extension or further completion of the first. Now, the deficiency of our nature at the first is a positive blessing, because it is the condition of our acquisition of the second and higher nature which is that of personality. Suppose we could not become more than merely what our nature makes us. Suppose the mysteries, but none the less surely the facts, of our own consciousness and freedom, our power to determine ourselves by our own acts and habits and character, did not enter into the matter and make persons of us. The deficiency of our nature is a blessing because it calls for and makes possible the higher development of our personality.

There is a second truth no less important to the final and entire ascent of our humanity than the first. If our nature was deficient in itself, it is equally true that we are insufficient in ourselves for the yet higher reaches for which our nature prepares us and for which our personal lives and characters are intended to qualify and fit us. Insufficiency does not absolve us from the obligation of ourselves working out our complete and eternal destinies. It only implies that we can do so only in conjunction with something else. Now to have been complete in and of ourselves would have been to be incapable of becoming more or greater than we are, or are capable of making ourselves. Christianity, on the contrary, holds out to us the promise and the hope of a sympathy and a union with all things, with the mind and spirit and life of the source of all things, which will make us infinitely more and greater than ourselves. It thus begets, or rather addresses and develops, what is already a part of us and only needs to be brought into consciousness by personal experience, the sense of insufficiency and the need of what will alone suffice for the attainment of the fulness of our life. That is it of which our Lord speaks, when He says that He is come that we might have life and might have it more abundantly, — more abundantly than nature can supply it to us, or than we can multiply it of ourselves. He is come to bring God into our lives, and with God all those powers and promises of the kingdom of God, which will suffice to make us not only all that we are but also somewhat of what God is. This is also what St. Paul experienced, when, entreating

to be relieved of the mortal infirmity he discovers in himself, he is answered from above himself, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Whereupon he cries, Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me. Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

I have said before that Jesus Christ nowhere condemns us for the deficiencies of our nature, nor for the insufficiencies of ourselves. He does not find fault with us that, in and of ourselves, we are constant violators of the eternal spirit that should animate us, and transgressors of the eternal law that should regulate and control us. He finds fault that we have not enough of the spirit to know that we violate it, nor apprehension enough of the law to know that we transgress it; that we have not enough of holiness to want it, or of righteousness to hunger and thirst after it. Blessed are they who know their own insufficiency, their own poverty and weakness, sufficiently to feel their need of the powers of the world to come, of the kingdom of God in their souls. And not only so; not only are they blessed who know their poverty and feel their need, but blessed is that poverty and that need in itself. That we are insufficient in ourselves for the holiness, the righteousness, the eternal life that are necessary to complete us; that only God in and with us can suffice for them; that without God we cannot compass the spirit or accomplish the law of our own perfection, only

means that God has made us not for ourselves and our own finiteness, but for Himself and His infinity, and that we are violating ourselves and transgressing our law in falling short, or in being willing and satisfied to fall short, of that.

The distinction among or between men which the New Testament recognizes and consistently makes, which our Lord Himself always makes, is not that some are sinners and some are not, but that some are so content to be sinners that they know not that they are sinners, while others are so convinced and convicted by the spirit of holiness of their own unholiness, and by the law of righteousness of their own unrighteousness, that they are conscious only of sin in themselves. St. Paul is exactly in the line of Christ when he says that it was never the end or expectation of the law to make us righteous. The only righteousness the law could produce would be a righteousness of our own in obedience to the law. But it would be a very low law that we could obey. When you have made the law as high as God Himself, you will want God Himself in you to enable you to fulfil it. By the law, then, is only the knowledge of sin. When the law has made sinners of us, has convinced and convicted us of sin, it has discharged its function. When it has prepared us for and turned us over to God who alone suffices us, or fills up our own insufficiency, for holiness, righteousness, and life, then it is *functus officio*, and ready to be abolished, as John the Baptist was swallowed up in the greater light of Jesus Christ. Blessed then are we even that we are sinners, if we know our sin; if

through knowledge of the curse of sin we have been brought to the knowledge of the blessedness of holiness, and if through experience of our weakness against sin we have come to experience the power of God unto salvation from sin.

We are hardly prepared as yet to enter into what I conceive to be the meaning of the other half of the first beatitude, the nature and extent of the reward attached to a true poverty of spirit. For all we have said of the kingdom of heaven or of God, I think we need the higher interpretations of our Lord's work and person in order to realize all that is ours in the possession of that kingdom. Some one has said, The kingdom of God is everywhere if we could but see it; and yet, alas, almost nowhere, because so few of us can see it. The fault indeed is all in our seeing. Jesus Christ has not come so much to create the kingdom of God without us, as to create within us the power to see it. I am come, He says, that they which see not may see. What He saw and what He would have us see is: all the eternal love that God the Father is, *ours;* all the infinite grace that God the Son is, ours; all the perfect fellowship or oneness with ourselves that God the Holy Ghost is, ours. If all this is ours, then all things are ours, and all blessedness is indeed ours.

VIII

THE BEATITUDES

We may touch more lightly upon the other beatitudes, not so much to give an analysis or exposition of themselves as to illustrate more clearly some of the features of the earthly life and character of Jesus Christ. For from our present point of view that character and life are our gospel and our salvation.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. It must already have struck us that the grounds or conditions of blessedness adduced by our Lord are largely those which would seem to us rather those of un-blessedness. Poverty, sorrow, persecution, reproach, rejection, — how can these be grounds of blessedness? We have already touched upon this point, but there is something in it the rationale or philosophy of which needs to be brought out more plainly. Aristotle teaches us how, especially in morals, opposites result from the same causes or conditions. Not only out of identical conditions do cowardice and courage arise, as the conditions are differently met, but the conditions of difficulty, danger, pain, and fear, which make cowards of us, are precisely the only ones which could beget courage or heroism in us. We cannot be brave except under circumstances calcu-

lated to produce fear and cowardice. So precisely the occasions and opportunities and temptations that yielded to and overcome by are the causes of sin, resisted and overcome are the causes of holiness. They are necessary to the one as to the other. Constituted as we are, we attribute our sin to what we call the flesh. We must just as truly attribute our holiness to that same flesh. For if we have no sin that does not come through yielding to the flesh, neither do we know any holiness which is not acquired by and which does not consist in the conquest of the flesh and its subduing to the spirit. This is easier to see than the fact that even our happiness or blessedness, certainly in the higher reaches of it, cannot be found in freedom from sorrow but only in the enduring and overcoming of sorrow. First for the fact, and then for the explanation of it. As to the fact, assuredly it was so with Jesus Himself. In the world, He said, ye have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. His own blessedness had been, and theirs must be, one not of conditions but of conquest and victory over conditions. The conditions calculated in themselves to produce sorrow were just those which overcome were necessary to produce joy. Thenceforth to St. John faith was the power to overcome the world, — not only its sin but its sorrow.

The explanation of the necessity of sorrow to blessedness seems to me to be this: The highest blessedness comes to us in the sense of our highest selves. It is the reflex condition of our highest states and energies or activities. Now these can be expressed only by the

terms holiness, righteousness, life. Let us take the first of these, the one most distinctive of Christ and Christianity. Holiness, we say, is freedom from sin. For us at least, situated and constituted as we are, that is no true or sufficient definition. Our holiness is no mere freedom from sin; it is a definite relation to, a definite attitude against, sin. It is a hatred of, a sorrow for, a resistence to, an overcoming of, sin — and all these to the point of at least meaning and intending, if not yet attaining, the putting away of sin. I speak only for beings like ourselves when I say that the consummate joy of holiness would be incomprehensible and impossible save through a corresponding and equal sorrow for sin. Lower joys or satisfactions might not be so dependent upon the experience of their opposites, but for us there can be no love of good which is not a hatred of evil, and no joy of what we should and would be that is not born of sorrow for what we are.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. There is an interesting historical as well as philosophical side to this beatitude. The question is as to the disposition of men towards men, which is the ultimately true and essential one, and which must therefore prevail in the end and possess the earth. It is a curious fact that in all the great answers to the question of human relationship and conduct, the same term has been selected to express the ideal, and that equally in all the inadequacy of the term has been felt and expressed. Men, according to Aristotle, in the spirit and temper of their dealings with one another, should be controlled by a disposition which he calls meekness

or mildness or gentleness. The term is the best we have, he says, but it is inadequate; it is not positive or strong enough. Moses stands out as the type of the Hebrew righteousness; he might be said to have been the creator of it. And we speak of the meekness of Moses as though that were his distinguishing trait. But surely we have all felt the inadequacy of the term meekness to express the character or disposition of Moses. Our Lord seems to have selected the same term to express His own fundamental disposition. Take my yoke upon you, He says, and learn of me. For I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. And yet we too feel that the word meek is scarcely the one to describe Jesus. We feel even that too much application of that term to Him has weakened the popular conception not only of Himself but of Christianity. It has contributed perhaps to the too negative and colorless interpretation of His great principle of non-resistance. The question is, as I have said, what is the true and perfect temper of man toward man, especially in the difficult and trying circumstances of human life. We may depend upon it that every really great answer to this question will be found to contain some, and perhaps many, elements of the truth. The Greek meekness, as the ideal temper, will rest upon the conceptions of reasonableness and moderation. The right reason, the power to see things as they are, is the natural basis of mutual understanding, and so of harmony and peace. When we add to this self-control, freedom of the will from prejudice and passion, we seem to have both the intellectual

and the moral conditions of the ideal temper. The lack is that even in the forbearance and magnanimity of the Greek there is, if not too much regard for the propriety or nobility of one's own attitude, yet too little regard in comparison for what St. Paul calls "the things of the other."

In the so-called meekness of Moses there is a lofty unselfishness, a great humility, a perfection of zeal and devotion, which momentary weaknesses and impatiences scarcely detract from. The Law and the Prophets between them were productive of great types. But the perfection of human spirit and temper waited still for its realization and manifestation. When Jesus speaks of the meek, He speaks of Himself. He speaks of that attitude towards men under all possible conditions of provocation and trial which He had deliberately made His own and which never deserted Him under any temptation to the contrary. The general attitude or disposition of Jesus towards individual men and towards the world of men was one not without its natural and mighty temptations to the contrary. When He was symbolically taken up into the exceeding high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them, we know not what visions and temptations of greatness and power and natural possibilities and opportunities passed through His mind. But they found no lodgment there. The prince of this world had nothing in Him. There were opposite spirits, opposite dispositions and attitudes, that contended for the possession of Him, but from first to last He knew but one. All self-seek-

ing, even the highest, the most spiritual, all pride or ambition or self-glorification of any kind, was of the devil, and was bidden to get behind Him. The Son of man, the ideal, the true, the eternal man can know or own but one spirit, one temper, one attitude or disposition upon earth, and that is, not to be served but to serve, to be not lord but servant of all. And there was no provocation of private or individual treatment against Himself that Jesus Christ had not to meet and treat, and He met and dealt with each with its own application of the universal temper that characterized Him in all. I do not know how we can define or describe in abstract terms the peculiar meekness, or what is attempted to be expressed by the meekness of Jesus. The thing is ever more and greater, and even different, from its best expression. That is why God never gives us definitions or descriptions of things, but always manifestations of the thing itself. As to the meekness spoken of in this beatitude we can only say that it is the universal attitude of Jesus Christ, and so the essential Christian attitude, in all the personal relations of men, and under all circumstances of possible provocation or trial or temptation. Of course its essential quality is love, the love that never faileth, that can adapt itself to every case and preserve its identity under every transformation, that can be all things and yet always the same thing.

But the interesting point about the beatitude is this: the perfect assurance of Jesus that the right, the true attitude of man toward man will be the ultimately successful and surviving attitude. The meek shall

inherit and possess the earth. The spirit and temper and disposition of Jesus, because it is the fittest, because it is that which alone gives true meaning and value to life, because it is the only bond of perfect relationship and intercourse among men, will survive and prevail. And has not the history of our Lord's own throne and sceptre and kingdom on earth, in spite of our unchristian want of faith and courage and devotion in sustaining and extending them, more than vindicated His confidence and His promise? On what other foundations could He have built a surer and more abiding dominion over men and possession of the earth than that He has built upon Himself and His own eternal attitude toward us and among us? The one law of that kingdom is that each of us in it shall be what He is, and that in every possible complication of mutual intercourse or relation we shall be each to each what He is to us all. What would be the consequence if that spirit should indeed inherit and possess the earth?

If one wishes to carry out the principles of the kingdom of Christ by the letter of the Sermon on the Mount, he will doubtless encounter great difficulties. The letter of non-resistance, for example, as there stated without qualification, might be impracticable in actual and general practice. Non-resistance to the evil-doer might be the greatest evil we could render him. But does not our Lord Himself by such sayings as this, Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot, suggest to us that the most unqualified statement of universal principles is intended to be

qualified by common sense and by particular circumstances? The one principle underlying all Christian dealing with one another is that in every case we are to consider all "the things of the other," and not merely to assert ourselves against Him. Now the things of the other must include not alone his immediate or his material good, but still more his moral good, or his spiritual and personal good. If one acts with the wisest and best reference to all that, it may well happen that he might be most truly carrying out the spirit in actually violating the letter of the divine precepts. Our Lord shows no disposition to give us dispensation from the use of our own reason and judgment and "perception in particulars." If our Christianity truly possesses that spirit of Christ, without which we are none of His, it can be trusted to deal with the letter of His commands.

In the fourth beatitude we have what is technically if not really the heart and soul of the theology of both the old and the new Scriptures: Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. With the Greek man is the measure. To stand well with one's self, to be true to one's own norm or standard or ideal, is the end. With the Hebrew God is the measure. To be right with God, to *stand* right with God — but on the ultimate only ground of *being* right with Him — that is the end. The rightness of the universe, righteousness as the universal law, the ultimate triumph of righteousness all appearances or all facts to the contrary notwithstanding, the sole obligation to be on the side of righteousness all condi-

tions or all consequences to the contrary notwithstanding — that was Hebrew theology and Hebrew law. The letter of the Old Testament law, whether natural, moral, civil, or ceremonial, was the truest and best expression of the law of God. Our Lord did the opposite of setting Himself against the letter of the law. There was not one jot or tittle of it that He abolished or supplanted otherwise than by most exactly and completely fulfilling it. It is the highest of rights to be able to say I love, — it is the greatest of wrongs to say that best thing, and then *not love*. It is the blackest of sins to use a rite or a ceremony which says so much, which means so much, which ought to *be* so much, and yet to use it without anything in mind or heart or life of all that it says and means and ought to be. The Pharisee, in making the letter all, made it not merely nothing but very much worse than nothing. In taking the place of, it practically displaced and abolished what it was intended for. That which was made for man, for humanity and mercy, as the sabbath, was made an excuse for inhumanity and the denial of mercy. That which was ordained for God and piety, as the temple, was made a place and a cover for selfish merchandise and earthly gain. The circumcision of the flesh was made to do duty for the mortification and purgation of the spirit. Sacrifice — as in the saying, I will have mercy and not sacrifice — had become the synonym of its own opposite and denial. In nothing else than in their opposite theories and practice of righteousness does the essential contradiction of the spirit of Jesus to that of His place and

day manifest itself more clearly, a contradiction which explains the tragedy of His life.

But to forget the false and look only upon the true, and upon the only true! To be right with God, to know His will and to do it! No Hebrew lawgiver or prophet, assuredly, hungered and thirsted more after that than did Jesus. None was more consumed with zeal for His Father's house or His Father's business. It was His meat and drink, a food that again and again lifted Him above the need or the want of earthly food — so that almost He lived not upon bread at all but only upon the word of God. Lo, I come to do thy will, O God! — by the which will, by the which perfect doing of the Father's will, we are all sanctified. But if Jesus had no less zeal for righteousness than lawgiver or prophet, He had also more knowledge of what God's righteousness is. To say that God is infinitely right, that His law is infinite righteousness, is only a formal statement or truth about Him. It says that what He is is right, but it does not say what He is — or consequently, what is right. Jesus knows better what right or righteousness is because He knows better what God is. God is Love, love of all things, especially love of all that can know and share His love. God loves love because love loves love. The only true zeal for God, the only right or righteousness, is love. That is the only real definition because it is the only one which gives the *res*, the thing or matter or content, the substance, of God or man or holiness or righteousness or life. Love is not only the spirit or law, it is the eternal actuality or reality whose are the

spirit and the law, of the universe. And it is that, all to the contrary notwithstanding. All that opposes that is only the opposite out of which that is born, out of which that is surely coming day by day, and æon by æon; is surely coming and will assuredly come at the last to the uttermost. Yet in that age, and in every age, men could and can be consumed by a zeal for God which conceives it its duty and makes it its business to put love out of its heart and to trample love under its feet! Righteousness can set itself against mercy, and zeal against charity!

Our Lord does not say, Blessed are the righteous, but, Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness. He allies Himself with us with whom righteousness is no fact of our nature nor any achievement of ourselves. It is something we have not and want, something we cannot attain and look for from outside ourselves. We do not hunger and thirst for that which is in or of ourselves, but only for that which comes to us from without and yet upon which our very lives depend. It might perhaps have been otherwise in almost anything else, but in spiritual things it must needs be so. Righteousness is the most personal thing in the world. It is the act and activity of ourselves. It is nothing if not of our own desire and choice and will and entire personal effort and activity. But we cannot supremely want or desire that which is already ours, or which we can easily ourselves get. The relation to righteousness and the attitude towards it expressed in this beatitude is the ground upon which St. Paul's later developed doctrine rests exactly and

securely. We are just or righteous before God, not for any actual or possible righteousness of our own, but because we see in Jesus Christ a divine righteousness, a righteousness of God, made ours by grace on God's part, and by faith on ours. Because that righteousness is the supreme object of our desire; because we look upon it as the supreme end and intention of our lives; because we accept it as God's word of promise, of power, and consequently of fulfilment, as regards ourselves; and so appropriate it to ourselves by faith and enter upon the possession of it in hope, — so God accounts it ours already, as He will make it ours in the end.

IX

THE BEATITUDES — *Continued*

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Our Lord used no more characteristic expression, none that more exactly defined His own spiritual temper or that more completely differentiated it from that of His opponents, than the saying, Go ye, and learn what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice. The end of the law, the soul of righteousness, the essence of sacrifice, is love, is mercy. And yet, as we have begun to see, each of these greatest things in the world, the law, righteousness, sacrifice, had come to stand for the opposite of love or mercy. The law meant the letter, not as the expression of but as substitute for the spirit. Righteousness was the scrupulous observance of forms that had killed the life they were instituted to keep alive. And the sacrifices were come, in our Saviour's own mouth, to express the denial and contradiction of that very sacrifice which His life and death so perfectly exemplified. The word and the thing, however misused, can never cease to be the essential content and the essential expression of Christianity. All love or mercy is only so in actual service, and all service is such only in sacrifice. The only true *sacrum factum* in the

world is the act of giving ourselves. We may give ourselves in many ways and in many degrees, but it is never real sacrifice unless its spirit is love and its form is mercy. We have seen that that which our Lord encountered, and in opposition to which His whole ministry took shape, in the spirit of His time, was not so much the formality, the hypocrisy, the deadness which prevailed, as that worse thing that underlay it all, the total absence of sympathy, pity, compassion, love. These are the things that fill and constitute and make life. These are the fulfilling of the law, the works of righteousness, the offerings up of sacrifice; and under the consecrated names of law, righteousness, and sacrifice, to be daily performing acts not only devoid but contradictory of these, that was to Him the great and unforgivable offence.

The point of the beatitude, however, upon which I desire most to touch is not the meaning or the importance of mercy, which our Lord's own words and acts ought to make plain enough to us. It is rather this: How the weakening and lowering effects of the being mere objects or recipients of mercy are always by our Lord Himself counteracted and corrected by the condition laid upon us of being subjects no less, or doers, of mercy. The point has been already touched upon, but it is of too much importance not to be again and again emphasized. There is nothing in these days so presumed upon as the mercy of God. We confirm ourselves in our indolence and indifference, in our weaknesses and failures and neglects, in our faults, our vices, our sins, with the thought that God is merci-

ful, that it is inconsistent with His goodness that we should reap the natural consequences of our omissions and our commissions. There are no allowances needed, and there are no allowances whatsoever made for us under the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There was all the allowance in the world needed, and all made, in nature and under the law. Where that was demanded of us which we had not to give, and that required of us which we were unable to perform, there was need for overlooking and passing by and condoning. But Christianity demands nothing of us that it does not give, and what it gives it cannot but demand. Suppose that when our Lord gave to the impotent man by His word to arise and walk, He had not required of the man on his part to arise and walk, — of what effect or account would have been the gift? Christianity gives us all things, but it requires of us absolutely the all things which it gives us. Not to require of us all things would be just so far to fall short of giving us the all things. Of course it requires only as it gives. As it gives only as we can receive, so it requires only as we can render. God does not, for example, give us the whole of His righteousness at once in fact, because we are incapable of receiving it all instantaneously. But He does give it to us all, as it is complete in Jesus Christ, in faith and in hope. God does not therefore require of us in ourselves now the whole righteousness of Christ. But He does require of us supremely to desire and intend it, to believe in it, to hope for it, to appropriate it to ourselves in anticipation, to work for it and to patiently wait for it. He means us to mean righteousness as

He Himself means it, for otherwise how can He give it to us? — Whatever God may give and however God may give, beyond our actual reception and use it can only be ours in faith and hope, and within our reception and use it is ours in fact only as these have made them so. So, to return to our text, it is a delusion to suppose that we may obtain mercy otherwise than as we ourselves feel and show mercy. Only so much of what is given or done to us becomes ours and enters into our own salvation as we ourselves give and do of it. All that is not yet assimilated and converted into ourselves is ours either not at all, or is ours as yet only in faith and hope.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. The blessedness promised is the vision of God, and the condition attached is the purity of our own organ of spiritual or divine vision. There was nothing upon which our Lord dwelt more solemnly than upon the conditions within ourselves of the knowledge of spiritual things. The hopeless sin of the Pharisees was their spiritual blindness. They had all but, if not quite, sinned away the power of spiritual vision. They could not see the light because they had no longer eyes for the light. When they had got to the point not only of not recognizing God in Jesus Christ, but even of seeing in Him Beelzebub, and so calling light darkness, then our Lord pronounces them on the brink of the irreparable, the unforgivable sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost. And what is that sin, for which in the very nature of it there is no repentance and from which there can be no salvation? It is the sin of having

sinned away the power of repentance or the possibility of salvation. Our Lord says that blasphemy against Himself may be forgiven; indeed, all their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme; but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin. The blasphemy consisted in attributing to Jesus an unclean spirit, and the guilt lay not in the offence to Him but in the condition it revealed in themselves. To call cleanness uncleanness, and light darkness, and good evil, betrays the last degree of moral blindness, the atrophy and death of the very organ of spiritual vision. We may sin against the Word of God, and even in supposable cases be blameless; because that is a light without us, and we may be honestly mistaken about it. Circumstances and conditions of which we are innocent may conceal it from us. But the Spirit of God is a light within us; it is not the outward light for the eye, but the inward eye for the light; and sin against that is a different thing. Aristotle asks what sort of ignorance it is that excuses a man; and answers practically as follows: An objective ignorance, ignorance of the thing, may excuse; but subjective ignorance, ignorance in the man, does not excuse. Our Lord says, The light of the body is the eye. If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness! The light that is *in thee* — what is that? It is, not the light for the eye, but —

the eye for the light. The Word of God is the principle of objective divine revelation to us; the Spirit of God is the principle in us of subjective vision, reception, and appropriation of the divine light and life. If one stood at midnight and could see no light, it would not be irreparable. The trouble is with the light, not in the eye. But if he stood at midday and could see no light, it would indeed be irreparable.

The clear of spiritual vision are the pure, the clean, in heart. Our Lord calls it the *simplex*, the simple or the single, eye; the eye that sees the thing it looks at because it is not looking at so many other things at the same time. How mixed and sullied are our thoughts of God, our communion with God, our service of God, our very desire for God — with other things! It is the other things — that share us with Him, and take the larger share — that stand between and hide Him from our sight. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

The seventh beatitude must have had a very deep significance for Jesus Himself. If He meant it with all the meaning it is susceptible of, it includes and expresses within itself the whole of His own divine human blessedness. What was it to Him to be the great peacemaker between God and man, between man and man, between all things that are at variance and in discord in all the world! And it expresses within itself also, implicitly at least, the method as well as the goal and reward of the great reconciliation. It is only in accomplished and realized sonship that God and

man, or God and creation, can be and will be made at one. In no other relation than that predestined one of sons, the foreordained end of the whole creation, can the one spirit, the one law, the one life of God reign through all things, and the universe of God be at peace. Again and again we cannot but see that the universal order which is the manifest meaning and end of things is no mere material or natural order. It is an order not of things but of wills; it is a moral order, a kingdom of righteousness. And if a real and abiding order of wills, then it must be something more and higher still, an eternal unity and harmony of spirits, a blessed reign of love. When God shall become the All-Father in His world through all becoming His sons or His Son, then shall love and unity reign, and the task of the great Peacemaker be accomplished.

When St. Paul speaks of God having been in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, he adds that unto us has been committed the word of reconciliation, the continuation and completion of the mission and ministry of peace. The work of the Peacemaker goes on only through the peacemakers. We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating by us and beseeching all to be reconciled. As working together with God *we* entreat also. We do not remember as we should that, as God was in Christ reconciling, so Christ is in us reconciling; that all the presence or operation of God or of Christ in the world now and henceforth is by the working in and through us of the common spirit and life of them and us. We now are the incarnation, not only incarnated but incarnating; we are

the atonement, atoned and atoning. What is doing upon earth of peacemaking, we are the doers of it. It is the work distinctively not of the Father nor of the Son, but of the Spirit. The love of the Father is complete, the grace of the Son is finished. Only the task of the Holy Ghost remains to be accomplished. And what is that task? It is first to bring us into the fellowship of the life, and then — and *so* — to bring us into the fellowship with the work of God in Christ, which is also the work of Christ in us. I and my Father are one, there is the community of life. My Father worketh and I work, there is the community of work. And the life and the work cannot be separated; the work is the life. We say that this is the dispensation of the Spirit. That can only mean that this is the time for *our part* in the dispensation or economy of the world. Whatever be the place or the part of the Holy Ghost in the divine nature, as the Spirit of Father and of Son, in the world of men the Holy Ghost has no other place or part, He cannot otherwise manifest Himself than in and as the spirit of men. In the spiritual half at least of God's creation, only that is done which we also do, only that is accomplished or attained which is accomplished or attained through us.

There is what we call a *present peace*, which, as we shall see, plays no small part in our immediate relations with God. As the very expression suggests, it is something provisional and temporary. It is the faith and hope which we have, the possession and enjoyment in anticipation, of the real and perfect peace which shall be ours in the future, — that future which means to

us, whensoever and wheresoever, the attainment of our goal and the consummation of ourselves. For there is no real peace save in real and perfect oneness with God, and in God with all others and all things else. The present peace lies in the assurance that God has provided that and holds it in trust for us in Jesus Christ, and that it is not only ours already in faith, but that it becomes ours in fact, just so fast as we can ourselves make it so. But from the first we are peace-havers, only as we are peace-lovers and peace-makers, and nothing so constitutes us in fact sons of God as peace-loving, peace-making, and peace-having.

I have after all dwelt so long upon the beatitudes because to consider them at all convinces us that in them we have the whole spirit, not only of the whole teaching, but of the whole life of our Lord. Moreover, we have clearly stated in them all the conditions, the causes, and the rewards, of the Gospel which it is our object to define. Let us see if we can, in conclusion, reduce all these to a unity among themselves, and so give a more single view of our salvation in Christ. All that we need or want, to supply our deficiencies or supplement our insufficiencies; all that we must be or do or accomplish or attain for that completeness of ourselves which is synonymous with our blessedness; all that perfection of relation with God and others, which is necessary to the perfect activity and blessedness of ourselves; all that attitude toward persons and things, toward all the particulars as well as the totality of our environment, which as our own right reaction upon them is the appointed means of forming our

characters, determining our personalities, and shaping our destinies, — in a word, everything essential to our being ourselves, performing our parts, and achieving our ends, we see realized and illustrated in the person of Jesus Christ. Therefore we say that the knowing Him is our Gospel, and the being what He is is our salvation.

X

THE DEATH OF JESUS

We come to the last of the beatitudes, the blessedness of persecution, calumny, and martyrdom. I presume that no view of the Gospel could dispense with the death of Jesus. Certain it is that all the Gospels concentrate attention upon that as containing and conveying the meaning of all that our Lord was or accomplished upon earth. The significance of the death has by some been treated as a second thought even on the part of Jesus Himself; as though failing, and foreseeing the failure, of realizing an external kingdom in His life, He fell back upon the conception and plan of an ideal spiritual kingdom to be realized through His death. The Gospels know no such possible change of view. The mind of Jesus as they reveal it is from first to last, and long before those nearest Him could comprehend it, set upon the kingdom as He actually founded it, and set against every temptation to any other conception of it.

Accepting, then, the death as the vital feature in any possible appreciation of the place and part of Jesus Christ in human history, what are the different significances that may be found in it? From the point of

view of this first part there can be but one. In it we make the Gospel to consist in the acts, character, and life of Jesus. He was in our human nature, under our human conditions, in our human life, *that* the revelation of which to us is a gospel and the participation in which is salvation. Everything, then, in this gospel turns upon the personal attitude and action and character of our Lord; the manner and matter of man He was; the truth, the beauty, the good He found in or put into our common humanity; the worth, the value, the blessedness, He drew and enables and teaches us to draw from it. This being the case, the significance and value of the death must have lain chiefly if not wholly in the fact that it is only death that sets the perfect seal or places the final valuation upon life. Call no man happy until he is dead, is a very old prescription. And that, according to Aristotle, because it is not enough to have lived well, if one has not died "accordingly." What gives still further significance to the death of Jesus is that it was not merely a death, but such a death as fully tested and tried and proved every quality of His life. The application of such a criterion is necessary not only to the testing and measuring of what has been attained in the life, but equally to the completing and perfecting of what has been so attained. To stop short of the final test is to fall short of the final perfection. For one of the lessons of such a life and death, of that supreme life and death, is that not only are we proved, but we are made and perfected by the things we suffer.

The profit to us, then, of a study of the details of the

last hours of Jesus Christ will consist in their perfect revelation and illustration of the qualities that characterized Himself. An analysis of these will be our best review and confirmation in His death of all that we have been learning in His life. Referring to types of which we have spoken of highest human action, and looking for these in the typical attitude of Jesus during the night and day of His final trial, we might say from the Greek standpoint that what most characterized Him was His perfect self-control or self-possession, the mastery and command under seemingly impossible conditions of His reason and His will. Circumstances could not have been rendered more difficult for the exercise of these — in the long night in Gethsemane of apprehension and heaviness unto death and agonized prayer for submission and endurance; in the surprise and panic and desertion of the early dawn, in which life and hope and courage are at their ebb; in the shameful and exasperating dragging to and fro from Caiaphas to Annas, and from Pilate to Herod; in the circumstances that need no recital of His brutal treatment, the weary way to Calvary, and the painful hanging upon the cross. I mention these dark details not to appeal to that sentimental sympathy which has been too large a part of our Christianity, but to call attention to what would be to us the practical impossibility under such circumstances of one's retaining possession of one's whole self and one's best self. The right reason, the power still to see things as they are, in their right relation and right proportion; and the free will, the will uninfluenced and unbiassed by selfish passion or

personal prejudice, — these were the Greek test and measure of the perfect manhood and its highest activity. We have it perhaps best expressed in what has been so happily characterized as the sweet reasonableness of Jesus. And surely never was there more difficult and therefore more crucial or testing opportunity to exercise a sweet reasonableness than when Jesus, looking down from the cross upon the perpetrators of the typical crime of the world, could feel as well as say, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. There is in these words not only a generous sentiment but a just and righteous judgment. Even there there was room for an *audire alteram partem*, a place for the charitable construction, an opportunity for finding excuse and making allowance. And no weak and sentimental complaisance was there in it, but eternal truth, as well as boundless love and pity. There is never a situation, not even in the typical crime, where there is not something of the truth, though it be an exaggerated truth, that *tout connaître est tout pardonner*. To see all the other side in the extremest case of others against ourselves, to make all allowance, to do all justice, is a triumph of something indeed higher and more akin to God than even right reason and just judgment, something without which under such circumstances these would be impossible; but it is a triumph of these also. And so what all His life had illustrated, the death most perfectly and completely confirmed, of the divine reasonableness of Jesus, in thought, feeling, and action. There is not one of the virtues of the Greek catalogue that may not be illustrated, or paralleled on a greater

or a truer scale, in the personal bearing of Jesus Christ. Even that most Greek of all the virtues, the virtue of magnificence, the rendering of the great service, the bearing of the great burden or expense, for the public weal or the glory of the commonwealth, and in the greatest way, — what was that in comparison with the act of Him who was all, did all, endured all, gave all, and all for the sake of the supremest good and the highest glory of all! And did it all not for the honor or the fame of it, but at the cost of misunderstanding and shame and rejection.

When we pass from the Greek reasonableness to the Hebrew righteousness of our Lord's attitude under the supreme test, there is much more to say. The principle involved there is that of obedience, the utter devotion of love, service, and sacrifice, to the will and word of God. We have seen that that which might most appropriately have been written upon the earthly life of Jesus are the words, Lo, I am come to do thy will, O God. Without undertaking as yet to define precisely what that will was, there is no question that from the beginning He felt that He had a definite work of God to accomplish. Now, at least, it is as far as we can go to say that that work was the sanctifying of human nature, the righteousing of human action and character, the perfecting of human life, in His own person. And so far as His person can touch and influence all other persons, by revealing and communicating to them the secret, the meaning, and the motive of human life in general, we might say that His work was to be the sanctifying and righteousing and perfecting of humanity

in general. At any rate, whatever it might be in its completeness, our Lord's lifelong devotion to the will and work of God is confirmed and perfected in His final sufferings and death. Early in His career He began to perceive that that was what it was obliged to lead to. And Jesus was no enthusiastic or fanatical seeker after persecution or martyrdom. He evaded and avoided it as long as it was right to do so. And when it was no longer right to do so, He went with His face fixed as a flint to meet it, but He went with a natural human reluctance and heaviness of heart. As His hour approached, He prayed to be saved from it; as the cup was presented to His lips, He entreated to the last that He might be spared the drinking it. But all this only shows the hardness of the test to which He was put, and so measures the limit to which His obedience was willing to go. There were other things He loved; He loved life; but above all things He loved the will of God.

It ought not to be hard for us to understand why the will of God should have gone so far and demanded so much; why He spared not His own Son to the very limit, and delivered Him up to the fateful uttermost. And Jesus Himself was wise enough to understand, and great enough to accept. Father, the hour is come. Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee! Only the perfect cross could win for humanity the perfect crown. He had a baptism to be baptized withal, and how was He straitened until He was baptized with it! But it was the world's travail, and the world's new birth.

But it was not Greek manhood in the perfection of all the virtues, nor Hebrew righteousness in all the truth of all the sacrifices, that shone most brightly in every act and attitude of Jesus in the day of His trial. It was that which is the divine heart and soul without which virtue and righteousness themselves are nothing, and with which they are made divine. It is the pity and compassion and love of Jesus that, as they had been the supreme motive of His life, so they burn brightest in His death. Having loved His own — and who, on His part, at least, are not His own? — He loved them unto the end. Sympathy, we are told, the bearing one another's burdens, is the law of Christ. Was ever sympathy — leisure from oneself, forgetfulness of self, thoughtfulness for others, carried to such length under such circumstances! The eve of the day is spent in preparing His disciples. In the garden of agony His concern is for them: Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation — that is, Keep awake, and give yourselves to prayer, for a great trial is coming upon you. When the surprise and the seizure come, He comes forward and says, I am He whom ye seek; let these go in peace. When Malthus' ear is cut off, He rebukes Peter, and heals the wound. Before the high priests He is only silent because He knows words are useless. In the midst of His own cruel and exasperating tormenting, He has time for a feeling and look of pain and sorrow for Peter's cowardly denial. In the interview with Pilate there is a touch of pity and sympathy for the vacillating governor; he was at least not the most guilty. Under the heavy burden of His cross He could feel and

say, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves — in sorrowful anticipation of what the guilty city was bringing upon itself. Under the first agony of the cross, His thought was of His mother, and upon a provision for her future care and comfort; then for His crucifiers, that God would take into account their ignorance of what they were doing; then for the penitent thief, that he should be perhaps the first beneficiary of the pardon He was Himself earning for all the world. And at the very last, in the bitter cry, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me, is there not something which breathes more thought of the possibility of *God's* abandoning than of His own sad abandonment?

There will seem to many to be a vagueness and unsatisfactoriness in the conclusion, that, after we have recognized in Jesus Himself the claim of a very definite mission, purpose, and work in the world, we should ourselves then find nothing in that work more definite or explicit than simply the being the man He was. What more or more definite meaning could He have had for us, what higher dignity or blessedness could He have conferred upon us, than the completing of our nature, the perfecting of our life, the accomplishing of our destiny? But in doing that, He did much more than that. In being the perfect man He was, under the impossible conditions in which He became so, He threw a new light upon those conditions which, practically for us, solves the problem or reveals the mystery of evil. We have nothing to do with a theoretic construction of the universe. Our business is to explain

what it is, and not why or how it is, or became, what it is. There is a — in the very highest sense — natural sequence and relation, and therefore a natural fitness, between all that Jesus Christ is in our humanity and all the circumstances, causes, and conditions under which and through which He became what He is. It is not in the power of our human imagination to conceive, or of our reason to suggest, how our Lord could have attained the height of the spiritual and moral manhood for which He stands, otherwise than under the conditions and by the process through which He did actually attain it. The evil that is in the world, just as it is in the world, is there for this reason, that the holiness, the righteousness, the spiritual and moral life, which are our only natural or supernatural completion, perfection, and blessedness, cannot come into existence except through conflict with and conquest of just that particular evil of the world. What more do we want, or what more can we possibly know, than that? When we have said that, through simply being what He was, Jesus Christ has revealed to us what God is, what we are, why evil is, and how good is to be achieved and attained, have we not said enough to explain and justify all the claims that our Lord made or could have made for His divine mission among us? But, for my own part, I am ready to admit that we have not said all that is to be said. What remains, however, must be said from yet higher points of view.

We have completed now what I have called the Gospel of our Lord's manhood and life upon earth, and I wish to repeat what was said in the beginning. In

giving so much space to this part of our study of the Gospel, the motive is not to make concession, or even to do justice, to new or modern points of view. It is rather to endeavour to make for ourselves full proof and use of the truth, or aspects of the truth, which modern knowledge, and modern methods of knowledge, have revealed or opened up to us in the unchanged and unchangeable Gospel. That the new light does not change our old Gospel, I hope will be made sufficiently apparent in the remaining parts of the discussion.

PART SECOND

THE GOSPEL OF THE WORK

OR

THE RESURRECTION

XI

THE SAVIOUR FROM SIN

We have up to this point endeavoured to confine ourselves to that in the Gospels which is matter of pure record. It is impossible to keep the most significant facts or events quite separate from some explanation of their significance, but an attempt at least has been made not to anticipate the Christian interpretation of the distinctive facts of Christianity. The Gospels, as we have seen, — at least the Synoptics, — are to a very successful degree strictly reportorial. But even in them there is the beginning of that interpretation which eventually shapes itself into Christian doctrine and dogma. How much of this interpretation is the result of reflection after all the facts it is hard to say. Let us, to be sure of being fair with ourselves, concede that it all is, that every trace of later Christian doctrine that appears in the earlier Gospels is at least of their latest matter and belongs only to their latest form. There will still, of course, remain the difficulty of determining in many particular cases what is of pure record, and what of later interpretation, but we can do our part to reduce this to a minimum.

We saw at the close of the previous part that from a mere record of the earthly life of Jesus, His words

and acts, it is difficult to obtain a single definite conception of what we call His *work*, by which we mean the thing He was on the earth to do and the thing which He actually accomplished by His life and death. I propose to show that Christian interpretation began upon this question at the very earliest possible, and that it pursued it with undeviating consistency to its successful answer. We shall first trace its history, and then discuss its meaning. And we may anticipate the concurrent conclusion of the New Testament upon the point in what was perhaps its latest expression of it: We know that He was manifested to take away sins.

The most significant and characteristic expression of the result of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is contained in the words, The Remission of Sin. Remission, or the putting away, of sin, includes two ideas, or perhaps more correctly two stages of the same idea. It means a real putting away by the New Testament process of sanctification. But it also means the provisional putting away by the equally New Testament act of divine pardon or forgiveness. Each of these two conceptions plays an important part in the drama of redemption or final deliverance and freedom from sin. And the complete meaning of each and perfect relating of both is no small part of New Testament doctrine. In tracing that doctrine through the three earlier Gospels, we shall take those Gospels as they stand in their critical integrity, but we will remember that, for example, the parts relating to the infancy are the latest, and that whatever there is in them of true record there is also a decided beginning of later reflection. And even of the

ministry of John the Baptist, while the historical fact of the intimate connection with it of the career of Jesus is of much clearer record, yet we must admit that the form it has insistently taken in every one of the records shows the determined shaping, as we shall see, of the final doctrine. But there are the Gospels as they stood in their first complete forms, and if some of the interpretation of the facts by the Church has been read back into what we think should have been a naked report of the facts, it does not follow that it is not true interpretation. It does go far to prove that that was the Christian understanding of the facts from the first.

The first page of the Gospels as they stand reports the fact that Jesus was so named because He it was — the expected one — who should save his people from their sins. His mission and power to do so is explained by a Messianic relation to God so intimate that He may be called Immanuel, God with us. In the — in this part quite independent — account of St. Luke, the announcement of the birth is in the words, Unto you is born this day a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. And what He was to be saviour from has already been declared in the prophecy uttered upon John the Baptist, Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready His ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto His people in the remission of their sins. When John entered upon his preparatory ministry, the one burden of his preaching, the one significance of his baptism, was repentance unto the remission of sin. We might not attach so much importance to this burden of John's, which was the burden also of Jesus', ministry, but for

its so solemn iteration in the very last utterance of our Lord Himself upon His departure from the earth, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations. When the Spirit had descended and the Church entered upon the mission in which Jesus was to be with it to the end of the world, what was first of all the message of St. Peter? Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance and remission of sins. And again, To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins. St. Paul takes up the burden: Be it known unto you, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you the remission of sins. In his account of his conversion, he repeats the words of our Lord in sending him to the Gentiles, To open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified in me. In all this long and consistent line of thought, or sequence of truth, as we have followed it through the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, we shall see how deeply rooted is the entire system of salvation which St. Paul so wonderfully elaborates in his epistles. It might all be summed up in the words, In Christ the remission of our sin, and the grace and power of our holiness, our righteousness, and our life. The writer to the Hebrews follows not one whit less explicitly: At the end of the ages hath

He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And finally, St. John begins his record with the Baptist's pointing to Jesus as the Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world, and sums up his Gospel, as we have seen, in the words, We know that He was manifested to take away sin.

The next point to be observed is the close and invariable connection of the remission of sin through Jesus Christ with His death and resurrection. After these had taken place, we may safely say that there is no reference to the remission of sin that is not immediately so connected. This may be illustrated by the fact that the two sacraments instituted to bring us into relation with the life of Christ distinctly relate us to Him through His death and resurrection. Through these and these alone is there any fellowship of life with Him. The only baptism unto remission of sin is baptism into a participation in His death and resurrection. And in the other sacrament that of which we partake is His body broken and His blood shed for the remission of sin. It may be said that all this is only an interpretation after all the events. Yes, but it is an integral part of all the Gospels, and I think we shall more and more feel the impossibility of escaping the conclusion that it is the essential point of the Gospel. That the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached everywhere in His name — and preached as the result of the death and the resurrection — I think that no one who understands the Gospels can fail to foresee all through them that this is their neces-

sary and predestined conclusion. That it is so, it shall be our most immediate object to prove.

It will be said that only by reading back into it can we find any intentional reference in the strict and proper Gospels to a general or universal remission of sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus *prior* to that event. It would not be strange that it should be so, even though the thing itself be true. Let us see just what we do find. I do not wish to press the so-called *locus classicus* in St. Matthew and St. Mark any further than the strictest criticism will go with me. Our Lord concludes almost the most characteristic discussion in all His teaching with the famous words, The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. The saying is capable of many interpretations, and for the most part has had a very definite interpretation imported into it from later thought. But for all that, to expunge or mutilate the saying itself would be, from almost any point of view, to rob our Lord of His most distinctive utterance. That He had a divine mission for men, and that He was to give His life for it, — take that away from our conception of Jesus, and how much remains? We may give different interpretations, but it is impossible to sacrifice the words themselves; there is too much of verisimilitude in them. There had arisen among the disciples the question of precedence in the kingdom that was to be established. Then Jesus enunciates the cardinal principle long since wrought out through or against temptation in His own life: Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over

them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister: and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant. There if anywhere is the one distinctive principle of His life, as we must all agree. But what is a drinciple, even the divinest, by itself or upon the lips? If our Lord had merely taught that, there would have been no Gospel. If He had not merely taught it but lived by it as the consistent maxim of His life, there would still have been no Gospel. What has made it a Gospel is not only the added word but the added fact that the Son of man gave His life to prove, to establish, and to make it an efficacious and practicable principle in all human life. From any point of view whatsoever, if there was gospel or salvation to be found in or through Jesus Christ, it was a gospel of salvation from sin to holiness, from death to life, and it was won for us at the cost of His own life. If the passage under discussion were, or if it be, the only one that teaches us out of our Lord's own mouth that His life was to be the price of our redemption or salvation, still it is so much the focus or goal of all His teaching, it is so manifestly impossible to suggest or conceive any other termination or consummation of His work in or for humanity, that the thing carries truth in itself and is in need of no other proof.

We come then to this conclusion, there is not one of the Gospels that would have been written, there would be no Gospel at all, if there had not been not only the death but the resurrection. Each Gospel means that

from the beginning, and could not possibly, as an organic whole, have terminated otherwise than in that. What does that mean? It means this: That, however the natural earthly life of Jesus, as contained between His birth and His death, was an integral part, and a most essential integral part as I am sure we have seen, of His divine work upon earth, nevertheless it did not contain in it that which was to make it a Gospel or constitute it a salvation. That remained to be added, and it consisted in this: the final fact of the decisive and complete accomplishment of the work which our Lord had been given to do upon the earth through His perfect death and triumphant resurrection. It has not yet fully appeared, as it needs to appear, why this was necessary. It is a turning point in the proper conception of what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is, and we must therefore devote a little special attention to the point.

There is a constant if not growing disposition to treat what we call the revelation of humanity in Jesus Christ as only humanity's own highest self-revelation or self-manifestation. Jesus is the wisest, truest, best of men, on the line of all wisdom, truth, or goodness among men. There was no cataclysmic break between the spiritual and moral attainment of other men and His. He was only the acme, the highest in a continuous series. Then it follows that He Himself is infinitely short of the final term of the series, because if He were that final term there would be others behind Him in unbroken continuity with infinity. If we decline to recognize a cataclysm between all others and

Jesus, we must give up all attempt at any real interpretation of the Gospels or of the New Testament. Because from beginning to end of the Scriptural record there is consistently observed between Jesus and all others a breach of continuity in the fact that He has absolutely transcended the limit of actual or possible human achievement or attainment in the earthly life. Jesus Christ is Himself the author and completer of that ideal standard of human holiness, according to which the degree of approximation is infallibly measured by the sense of still and ever separating distance. If it is intolerable to us that mortal man should claim to have reached not only a participation but an equality of holiness with God Himself, whence have we that appreciation of either the holiness of God, or what ought to be the proper modesty or humility of man, but through the revelation of Jesus Christ? What true saint is there of the New Testament or of Christianity whose sanctity is not measured by just this humility? We are familiar with St. John's: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us; and St. Paul's: Not that I have already attained, or am already perfect. But what other voice has ever been heard in Christianity save that of only humility as to what we are, and faith only in all we ought to be in the one only Holy One? Now the self-same spiritual consciousness which, when highest and when truest to itself, is thus most humble, and humble in the name of Jesus, not only takes no offence at the claim of a perfect and divine holiness on the part of Jesus, but finds it inconceivable to think otherwise

of Him than as possessing it. It would only weaken the testimony of the whole New Testament in the matter to appeal to particular texts. Any one acquainted with the fully self-revealed consciousness of our Lord Himself, or on the other hand with the entire manifold record concerning Him, will know that in neither is there the thought of any, the least, trace of sin in Him. We are so accustomed to this human anomaly of the perfection of humility and the utter sense of personal perfection combined in one, that we do not sufficiently question it or look as deeply as we ought into its explanation. To deny it is to give up Christianity, or else to make of it something totally different and opposite from itself. To admit it is to recognize in it such an exception to and transcendence of human experience as to amount to the spiritual cataclysm of which we spoke. I will anticipate here what lies some way before us to make the following explanation. The coexistence in Jesus of a perfect human humility, with the entire absence in Him of what is in us the chief ground of humility, the sin that none but He has ever surmounted on this earth, is explicable in this way: While we cannot say that the holiness of Jesus was only on the continuous or unbroken line of all other human holiness, — because in fact it transcended or passed beyond the limits of that, — yet also we must say that it was a human holiness, identical with ours in kind, and identical with it in what we might call its natural history, or the conditions and law of its origin and growth. Now all human or creature holiness comes through the one only law

of the submission of nature and self, as deficient and insufficient for holiness, to the one only sufficient source and cause of holiness. Consequently, the holier one becomes the more one passes out of all dependence upon mere nature and all conceit of mere self. These are left behind in the growing experience of that which, while it is our ever growing selves, is ever more and more consciously not of ourselves. The humility in the holiness of Jesus is the humanness in it; it is the memory and mark of its earthly history. The human spirit that becomes more selfless and humble as it grows more divine will be most so when it has attained its divine perfection. One of the most beautiful of the many anomalies of Christian character is that the more righteous it becomes the less self-righteous it becomes; the greater it grows the more modest it grows.

In what I have called the cataclysmic fact of our Lord's humanly acquired and yet perfectly acquired holiness, we have already all the spiritual side of the mighty truth of the Resurrection. Humanity was already in Him dead to sin and alive to God. There was more, but there was nothing greater, to follow. The sinlessness, or more properly the holiness, of Jesus was every whit as great a miracle, — if we please to call it so, — it just as much transcended ordinary — but for Him, universal — human experience, as His resurrection from the dead was or did. Indeed, they were one and the same act, though separable and separated parts of it. The Conqueror of sin was the Conqueror of death.

XII

SIN AND ITS TREATMENT

We will assume a sufficient knowledge of what sin means, to begin with. If any more exact definition is needed, it will come out of itself in the discussion. If sin is not itself a definite and definable thing, at least its contrary or contradictory, holiness, is so; it may therefore be defined by its opposite. There is one other point upon which I desire to be understood at the start. In studying the problem of sin and its treatment, we shall probably find ourselves treading in the footsteps of New Testament and traditional thought on that subject. Immediately we shall find ourselves using the language of St. Paul, the first Christian thinker and interpreter of the matter in hand. If so, it will be only because we cannot help it. I think that the Christian doctrine of sin and its treatment was developed in the New Testament, and primarily by St. Paul, on the only possible line and in the only possible way. I find myself, therefore, unable to depart from it, but let it be understood that we are following it not upon the ground of its authority, but from the necessity of its truth. Let the discussion itself show whether that necessity really exists.

Sin is of all things in the world a personal matter.

It is the thing in the world the most independent of God Himself, and it is independent of Him to the point of contradiction. Sin, in order to be sin, must be so, in the language of scholasticism, not only in its matter but in its form. We might say that sin is a violation of the spirit of holiness, or of the law of righteousness. But there may be a material violation of these which is not a formal violation of them, and which therefore is not sin. The material definition of sin would be the transgression of the law; the formal definition is that it is the personal, the conscious and voluntary, transgression of the law. An animal or an infant or an idiot might perform an act materially identical with what would be in a responsible person the worst of crimes. But there would be no guilt or sin because that is lacking which not only defines but constitutes these, viz.: consciousness and purpose or choice. This is what St. Paul means when he says that sin was always in the world, even prior to the law; but that sin is not imputed where or when there is no law. By law we mean that which in any way expresses or conveys to our consciousness or our knowledge the distinction and difference between what we ought and what we ought not. Until that distinction is born in us there can be no actual or real sin. The matter of it may and will be present, but it is not imputed, it cannot be by ourselves and it is not by God, accounted or regarded as sin, because the essential condition and constituent of sin is not yet there. When the law, in any form or manner, has once expressed and actually conveyed to us the opposition of ought and ought not, the differen-

tiation of sin and holiness has begun. So by the law is the knowledge of sin; but where is the knowledge of sin there is equally the knowledge of holiness, for each can be known only through its opposite.

Sin and holiness as opposites are a matter of personal attitude toward one and the same thing. Let us recall the profound saying of Aristotle, that opposite habits, virtues and vices, spring and grow out of opposite attitudes or responses to the same things — what we might call opposite reactions upon the same stimuli. Precisely what, yielded to and overcome by, creates in us a vice, resisted and overcome develops in us the opposite virtue. So far as what we are or become personally may be said to be due to external causes, we might say truly that vice and virtue, sin and holiness, proceed from identically the same causes. That is so because what we are personally cannot properly be said to proceed from causes without ourselves; they must proceed from ourselves. Different personalities are not produced by different circumstances or conditions, but by different attitudes and actions under identical conditions. What is necessary to make a sinner is equally necessary to make a saint, and so each may be said to have been produced by the same causes.

We may pause to remark that there is nothing in what has been just said that contradicts the patent fact that men are actually for the most part what their times and circumstances make them. No one can deny that taken in the mass or by the average men for the most part are overcome by, rather than overcome,

their outward conditions. But under all circumstances there are men who are relatively different in similar situations. And so far as this difference is at all that of good or bad, virtuous or vicious, holy or sinful, it is wholly due, not to different conditions, but to different attitudes toward the same conditions.

Sin then being, like holiness, so essentially and distinctively a matter of personal attitude that its very formal definition turns upon that fact, it follows that as it can originate only through ourselves, so can it be put away or separated from us only through ourselves. None but we can, in the real sense, put away our sin, because who but we can assume and maintain an attitude which shall be our own? Consequently, all talk in the Gospels or in the New Testament upon the subject of the remission of sin is based upon a condition in ourselves which is a *sine qua non*. This condition we have now to analyze and investigate. And because our English expression for it, repentance, scarcely covers the ground, not merely of the thing, but even of our proposed discussion, let us for the time do what some have even wished that our original translators had done permanently, anglicized the Greek term. The personal spiritual attitude toward sin or holiness, because an attitude toward one is a corresponding attitude toward the other, which alike John the Baptist and our Lord proclaimed as the condition of the remission of sin, is expressed in the Greek by the word *metanoia*. John the Baptist came preaching the baptism of metanoia, or repentance, unto the remission of sins. We have seen how the ministry of John is

carefully expressed in these exact terms by every one of the Evangelists. We have seen how our Lord at the close, according to St. Luke, states what is to be preached in His name precisely in these terms. We have seen how, as reported in the Acts of the Apostles, both the Jerusalem apostles and St. Paul did make just those words the burden of their preaching. We have seen how St. John in his first epistle states the end of our Lord's coming to be the taking or the putting away of sin. Finally, it will require a separate special exposition to see fully how the entire doctrinal system of St. Paul on the subject of what is, inadequately, termed *justification* is based upon the truth of the remission of sin through Jesus Christ upon the necessary condition of a true repentance. It will repay us, therefore, to take the three or four words of the Baptist as a text, and I think we shall find in this case a careful study of the words a great help to the discovery of the thing which is the matter of concern.

It is rather strange that in the brief phrase we are about to discuss there is more or less of doubt or ambiguity in almost every word. The inadequacy of the term repentance we have alluded to. Between the Authorized and the Revised Versions the question is raised whether it is forgiveness or remission of sin that is the gift of the Gospel. There is reason I think in the substitution, if only in the fact that the second term is larger and more inclusive. Again, the two versions raise the question whether it is repentance *for* or repentance *unto* remission or forgiveness. The only word in the phrase that is unambiguous is the indu-

bitable one *sins*. And yet a large part of the light to be conveyed to us by our text comes through these very ambiguities.

The issues of life and destiny turn upon our personal attitude to the two things we term respectively sin and holiness. The totality of one's attitude toward each of these could be expressed adequately by only a very comprehensive term, such as it would be impossible to find. The thing is too large to be contained in a single word. It would be of advantage to adopt in each case a word of another language into which as a symbol we might crowd all the meaning of the thing to be expressed by it. Such a suitable word would be *metanoia*. But, to avoid the appearance of pedantry, let us return to our own language, and try to stretch to something like adequacy two terms which have to carry in them a very large part of the truth of the Gospel. The two words are repentance and faith. Let us by repentance understand the totality of what ought to be one's attitude toward that thing in human experience which we call sin. And by faith let us understand the corresponding attitude towards holiness. It is, as we have so often said, the issue between these two attitudes that constitutes the turning-point of human life, that imports into it the supreme interest and concern of personal probation, and that determines not only the fact but the final quality and fate of personality. Holiness and sin bear the same relation to spiritual life and death that health and sickness do to physical life and death. The fact that the spiritual issue is made to depend upon attitudes of our own, or of ourselves, has

its ground in the deeper fact that spiritual life is essentially the act or activity of personality; it is something which we must ourselves be and do. We live and become ourselves in the act or activity of choosing and determining what and of what sort we shall be. To be of the universal and eternal divine spirit is holiness; not to be so, or to be not so, is sin. The possibility of such a choice is the condition of at least human personality, and of all distinctions of personal quality or character. Without it there could be no good or bad, right or wrong, holiness or sin.

What then ought to be one's total aspect or attitude toward sin? Let us recall the fact that only holiness, and not sin, is susceptible of positive definition. The aspect or attitude toward holiness is necessarily that toward the universally and eternally actual spirit and law in which God manifests Himself to us. The attitude toward holiness is the attitude toward God; it is faith. Our only possible directions of self-determination are Godward and sinward. The choice between them is the issue of what we shall be, with all its consequences. I say *its* consequences, because there are no consequences for us here or hereafter, except such as not merely flow from but actually consist in what we ourselves are. What then ought to be the totality of our attitude toward sin? It might perhaps be best expressed in the one word *negation*. Repentance is the personal negation of sin; it is the entire opposition of our entire selves to sin. In the first place, what is our entire selves? The attitude required is not one of the mind only; it must equally be one of the heart

and of the feelings or affections. Nor is that enough; it must be of the will, and of the effectual will. And so not merely all the rest, but it must be of the whole activity and actuality of the man. Repentance must be the controlling and determining fact and factor of the life. Such is the *metanoia*, the new mind, new heart, new will, new life, and new blessedness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the putting and the passing away of old things, the coming about and the putting on of new things with us. For there is no repentance that is not the mere reverse of faith. Faith may be defined as the personal affirmation of God or of holiness. It is the entire setting of the entire man God-ward or holiness-ward. Faith when it is made perfect must possess and determine the entire mind and heart and will and life, and must make the man what its object is.

We must analyze a little further what we mean by saying that repentance must be not only an act of the entire man but an entire act of the man. An act, in order to be real and effective, must fulfil two conditions. In the first place, it must not only be directed to a definite and single end, but it must from the very beginning mean and intend that end. In the second place, there is no real meaning in an act which only means and does not attain, or is not certain at some time to attain, its end. What must be the single and the definite end of repentance? Our passage gives the only possible answer. It is the putting away of sin. Whose putting away? Who but we can put away our sin through repentance? I am the furthest in the

world from saying that we are sufficient of ourselves to put away our sin. But I am equally certain of the fact that it is only we ourselves that can put it away. Let us think of it again. My sin, like my holiness, is how I myself am disposed, what my own attitude is, toward the two possible directions of human life and activity. Will I follow my reason, my conscience, the spirit of holiness, the law of righteousness, or will I be turned aside from these by my passions, the innumerable opportunities of inordinate desire, and the thousand external objects that attract and tempt them? Just this is my probation, the condition and opportunity of my self-determination; and the answer depends upon acts that I myself perform, habits that I form, and the character which I thus make for myself. In other words, everything turns upon the settled and fixed disposition or attitude which I give myself toward the complex conditions which, according to it, make life good or bad. The conditions are indeed complex, but the decision is a single and a simple one And it cannot be a half-way or partial one, and at the same time be sincere and real. The preposition that connects repentance and remission in our text is a very important part of it, — and that, whether we translate it *for* or *unto*. In the one case it means intention or purpose, and in the other it imports actual accomplishment or result. Repentance means nothing if it does not intend the whole of holiness, the complete putting away of sin; and it is ineffectual, it comes to nothing, if it is never to attain or accomplish that end. The preposition in question is interesting as that of the end

or the final cause. In a real action the essential and vital thing is the end, what is intended at first and what is accomplished at last. Judged by this test, what are most of our repentances? A little sense of sin, a little self-condemnation and sorrow, a little desire to be free from it, a little purpose to do something to that end. If we should honestly set ourselves to see just how much of any of these there is actually in it, it might well surprise and shock ourselves. Now, if Jesus Christ teaches anything, and stands for anything, it is a real and complete repentance based upon a real and complete faith, a thoroughgoing and effectual attitude toward sin and toward holiness, an attitude which shall be so whole an activity of the whole man that it will make a complete new man of him. It is this and this alone which makes the Gospel of Jesus Christ, according to St. Paul, the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. It is the power of a perfect holiness, a perfect righteousness, and a perfect life.

Here comes in the instructive and the important ambiguity of the expression we have been discussing. Is it only forgiveness or is it an actual and real putting away from us of sin? Is it only *for* or is it actually *unto* the full and perfect end of repentance? The real and effectual treatment of sin is by its very nature a joint act or activity of God and man. Only man can perform it, but man can perform it only through the Eternal Spirit which is God. When it is accomplished, it is the whole man who must have accomplished it. His whole mind and heart and will and activity must have gone into the accomplishment of it; it must have

been a complete attitude on his part toward sin and toward holiness, a perfect repentance and a perfect faith. But equally God must have been in it, and must have been the doer of it. The whole Spirit of God must have imparted itself to him, the whole Word or Truth or Law of God must have fulfilled itself in him.

Now, according as we take the end or final cause of repentance as purpose in the beginning, or throughout the process, or as attainment or accomplishment in the final result, we shall give different senses to the divine human act of remission; or rather we shall be looking at it from different points of view. If I am looking at the entire act of the putting away of my sin in Jesus Christ — both God's and mine — I mean the real putting away, by the actual putting off on my part of sin and the putting on of holiness. I recognize, of course, that this is a process of gradual transformation, an indefinite — not to say infinite — process of which the divine holiness is only the limit. But still I see it as a whole, and the whole can only mean an actual participation in the holiness, the righteousness, the life of God Himself. Meantime, just because the whole process means so much, there arises another tremendous question of our status with God and with ourselves at its beginning or throughout its course. Even a St. Paul or a St. John is infinitely remote from feeling himself to have attained, or to be without sin. What is the position of us all, who the more we mean and intend holiness or righteousness, only the more feel that we infinitely have not attained and do not possess it? Here comes in the other sense of remis-

sion — not as yet the complete impartation, but already the perfect imputation to us of the whole holiness, righteousness, and life of God as realized for us in Jesus Christ. The moment a human life has really made Jesus Christ its *end*, although that end be as yet only the end of purpose, and infinitely not yet the end of attainment, that moment God imputes to that life what it means and intends as though it had already accomplished it. St. Paul perfectly caught the principle, and perfectly expressed it in the doctrine which is the root of his system: Faith is imputed to us for righteousness; it is reckoned or accounted as being righteousness.

The common sense or the philosophy of it is not far to find. It is a principle upon which even we ourselves act in our imperfect measure. Let us perfectly know that one fully means a certain act or a certain part towards us, and that fact establishes a status between us as complete as though he had already fulfilled it. Of course, as we shall abundantly see, there is a great deal more ground for a basis between God and ourselves upon the mutual understanding of a repentance on our part which means the putting off of sin and a faith which means the putting on of holiness, but the above illustration will suggest the true fact that the divine method in our spiritual treatment can be relied upon for both common sense and philosophy — that is to say, to be the most perfectly natural and the most perfectly rational one.

XIII

THE SINLESSNESS OF JESUS

We have seen how the Gospels terminate logically and naturally in the commission, That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in the name of Jesus Christ unto all the nations. We have seen how precisely so it was preached, and that that from the beginning was the Gospel. It is most exactly expressed by St. Peter in the words, In none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved. We cannot ourselves explain this plain statement of the Gospel nor enter into the Christian or Catholic understanding of it except on the assumption that not only is salvation from sin given in Jesus Christ, but that salvation from sin was wrought or accomplished by Jesus Christ. The taking away or putting away or abolishing of sin was accomplished by an act on His part, and it was accomplished first in His own person. He Himself was sinless, not by any mere fact of His own nature — differencing it from ours — but by an act of Himself in our nature, which we too were to enter into and make our own and so perform for ourselves in and with Him. He by Himself made purgation of our sins. This was an act, *the* act, of His

whole life, but an act finished or consummated in His death. He was manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Which means that He put away the sin of the world by primarily putting away sin from Himself. He destroyed it, to begin with, by His own death to it, or by putting it to death in its encounter with Himself. He was manifested to take away sin. And this He does in two acts. The first is expressed in these words, And in Him there is no sin; it has been condemned and abolished in His own person. The second is, Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not; it is abolished in whosoever sincerely enters into Him by entering into His death to sin and making it his own. In view of this relation of the death or sacrifice of Jesus Christ to ourselves, there ought to be no hesitation from any Christian point of view about such words as the following: There is one God; one mediator also between God and man, Himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.

The point is that Jesus Christ did by Himself destroy sin. And now the question is, by what act or by what process did He do so? This involves the whole question of the personal relation of our Lord Himself to the universal human fact of sin. Let it be understood that in our present discussion we are not to take into account any theory of a higher than human personality of Jesus. He does not do so in His own discussions. In them all He is Son of man, and He takes His stand and rests His claims not upon any difference from men, but upon what He is as man. But Jesus Christ will forever stand for spiritual manhood, for man in the

perfection of his Godward relation. He embodies in His person the truth of the divine fatherhood realized upon earth by the attainment or accomplishment of human sonship. For our sonship to God is not a thing that simply *is*. We have to *acquire* the divine nature that constitutes or makes us children of God. And that nature is holiness. Holiness is in itself what God is; and in us it is participation in what God is. It is to share His spirit, and so His character and His life. Jesus Christ is to us not only the fact but the way of holiness — The Way, as well as The Truth and The Life. We have in Him the *act* as well as the fact of holiness. His holiness, if it was to be ours, had to be made like ours under the experiences of human life upon earth. It behooved God, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. It was necessary that He should taste death for every man. Indeed, if Jesus were man at all, there is but one holiness and one way of holiness for man. Just as much as sin for man is the yielding of his spirit to his flesh, so only is his holiness to be acquired through the subduing of his flesh by his spirit. It is the very condition and nature of the human spirit that it can come about only through itself. And it can come about through itself only by an act of original, self-determined, and permanent, *choice*. If it is to be good or bad, right or wrong, holy or sinful, it must go through an act of free choice between these opposites, and its goodness or badness, its holiness or its sin, will be simply a name for the permanent and eternal choice it has made. This is what

we mean by formal freedom, in distinction from the real freedom which we acquire in the end through the permanent choice and possession of holiness. But there can be no real freedom in the end if there was no formal freedom at the beginning. A holiness or freedom not wrought out through the pangs and travail of our own free choice and self-determination is not our own, and is therefore, so far as we are concerned, no holiness or freedom at all. We cannot, therefore, begin to discuss the human holiness of Jesus at all, if we are not to ascribe to Him the formal freedom which is the condition and the essence of our own humanity.

But we need not discuss that question in a study of the New Testament. That, from beginning to end, is based upon the mighty issue for humanity, decided once for all in His person as its new head and representative. As humanity had fallen in Adam, and by his act or its own act in him, so humanity threw off its sin and death in Christ, and by His act or by its own act in His person. We need not concern ourselves, if we are disposed to do so, about the literal or historical truth of Adam. If man has sinned or is sinful, it can be only through himself that he has done or become so. There can be no sin except through personal responsibility. Now, just let us take Adam as standing for that self or selfhood of humanity, or of every man, through which it has become and is sinful before God, as indeed it has and is. The truth then simply amounts to this, that as man of or in himself (his natural estate, or Adam) is universally subject to sin and death, so in Christ has He been redeemed and raised, or has raised

himself, out of that natural condition of subjection to sin and death. The question is first, as we have stated it, how did Jesus Christ in Himself, or humanity in His person, accomplish that act? The answer which we will first give and then amplify is: that He accomplished it humanly through a perfect human attitude toward sin and toward holiness, sustained throughout His life and consummated in His death. But for the certainty of being misunderstood — against which I shall do my best to guard this discussion — I should say that Jesus Christ, or humanity in Him, accomplished salvation or holiness through a lifelong and death-completed act of perfect repentance and perfect faith. By a perfect repentance — in the larger sense in which we are now using it — I mean an attitude toward sin that is *unto* the putting away of it. And by a perfect faith I mean an attitude that is *unto*, that actually attains, the complete putting on of holiness. Such a repentance is necessarily *unto death*, — either the death of sin in us or the death of ourselves to sin, or probably both. Such a faith is necessarily *unto life*, unto the limit of the completeness of the life of God in us and of our life in God. In other words, Jesus Christ accomplished that perfect human act which is in itself the only perfect human salvation, the perfect putting away of sin by the perfect putting on of holiness.

The more we consider the matter the more shall we be convinced, from the spiritual side of it, that for us there is no real and complete salvation except through a real death and resurrection. A negation of sin unto the extinction of it, an affirmation of holiness unto the

realization of it — that is what our salvation means, and that is precisely what Jesus Christ accomplished. The death that He died, He died unto sin once — or once for all; because it was a complete and perfect death: the life that He liveth, He liveth unto God. But still the question remains: Why is the putting to death of sin in us likewise a death of ourselves unto sin? Especially why was it necessary that our sinless Lord should die to sin? The answer is that He was only humanly sinless in that He humanly died to sin. His lifelong death to sin created and constituted His sinlessness, — or rather His holiness; because there is no negative sinlessness that is not an act of positive holiness. The completer answer to this question, however, will require a going over of the details of what we may call the formation or evolution of the human sinlessness of Jesus.

Our Lord, because He was Son of man, and because He could not be so and be devoid of what is the essential constitution of humanity, entered upon life confronted by the one issue that meets us all and makes us all whatsoever we are. The one issue was that of sin or holiness. He could only be sinful by yielding to any of the numerous and ever-present occasions, opportunities, and solicitations of sin that come to us from without. Equally He could be holy only through resisting and denying these same universal and natural temptations. As we have said, the selfsame conditions or so-called causes that produce sin are necessary to the formation of holiness. We cannot say that temptation did not play a part, and a part that was as neces-

sary as it was tremendous, in the spiritual development of the life and character of Jesus Christ. Let us guard ourselves from offence in every direction by agreeing upon the ancient formula: We do not say that our Lord as man could not have sinned if He willed, but God forbid that He should have willed. All that we need to maintain is that our Lord in fact did not sin, not from necessity of His nature, but in the exercise of His human will; and that that exercise consisted not only in the resistance and denial of temptations from without that were real temptations, but in something within that was self-denial, and that in its extremest forms was self-sacrifice. It is not sin that we are either subject to temptation from without or liable to temptation from within. It is not only a fact, but the most essential fact, of our human constitution. It constitutes the issue which makes us persons, which imparts a moral quality to our acts and lives, and which in enabling us to be of ourselves enables us also to be of God. That the essential point in our Lord's early or pre-public life was, *how* He had used His human freedom, or what sort of man He was, is proved, as we saw, by the very form of the divine approbation of it at the close: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Commendation such as that, or such an expression of divine pleasure, is applicable only to human or creature action, disposition, or character. It recognizes and approves the human choice and constancy, and rewards it by laying upon it mighty tasks and painful tests, as well for its further making as for its more perfect proving and approving.

We have seen that Jesus brought to His public ministry a character thoroughly formed, and an attitude toward life definitely and finally taken. But not so utterly so but that He could even still be assailed by yet more subtle and perfect temptations. When He had withstood and vanquished these too, we are told that the Tempter departs from Him only for a season. At the great close, the final crisis which He specially claims as His hour, the hour that should glorify by proving and perfecting Him to the limit, unto the death to sin and unto the life to God and holiness, — was there not still temptation there? If not, then also there was nothing there to conquer, or to be exalted and glorified by. Not my will, but Thine be done! — expresses forever the fact that there was something within Himself to deny, to sacrifice, through the Eternal Spirit to offer up as the perfect oblation to the Father.

With regard to the whole general matter of temptation and sin, it is remarkable how St. Paul, St. James, and St. Peter agree in almost the very terms of their teaching. They all recognize not only the necessity but the blessedness of manifold trials or temptations. The benefits to be derived from them come through patience or endurance, the power to suffer and survive; and they consist in a quality or character which they unite in calling *provedness* or *approvedness*, and which is the condition of receiving the reward or crown of life. On the other hand, temptation yielded to produces sin and death; and here it seems to me that St. James's account of the process can be shown to be psychologically and scientifically exact. Temptation, he

says, does not come from God, but each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own *epithumia* and enticed. This *epithumia* is not in itself sin; it is too strongly rendered *lust*, and is in reality only the natural appetites and desires which are an essential part of our human constitution. But for these we could not live our natural lives, and but for these we should be incapable of those very temptations which have just been stated to be the very conditions, if not causes, of our supremest blessedness. *Epithumia* is indeed the only *matrix* or mother of sin; in it alone lies our susceptibility for sin, and when sin does come it comes only through appetite and desire. But it is only when it has actually conceived and borne sin that it becomes sinful. If our appetites and desires — as ours, through our own complicity with them, by consent and cooperation of our own minds, affections, and wills — have imported into us the sperma or seed of wrong or false or inordinate gratification and indulgence, then sin is born in us. And then it comes not from the external temptations, nor even from the internal susceptibility or capacity for temptation, but from the wrong reason and the weak will of the person in not keeping the appetite or desire to its proper and ordinate object and function. A natural desire which by our own indulgence in sinful gratification has grown inordinate or abnormal becomes a lust, and to be tempted by our lusts in this sense is in itself a sin, because to have such lusts at all is a sin. For this reason, with men in general, temptation is itself sinful; because for the most part our temptations come not alone from

external stimuli and internal constitution, but from habit and propensity bred in us through our own past complicity, through sinful entertainment and indulgence, if not always in act yet in thought and sympathy. It is only beings who like ourselves can reproduce in consciousness the objects of our desires and pamper these with the unwholesome food of memory, imagination, and anticipation, who are capable of lusts in the stronger and sinful sense. But as to have lusts and indulge them is our sin, just so not to have lusts or indulge them, by the proper control and sanctification of our natural desires, is our holiness, and our only way of holiness. The possibility of the sin is the condition of the holiness.

Now let us see how the indubitable facts of our Lord's sinless human life compel us, as I hold, to construe the manner and the matter of His holiness. He was born into and lived our life and was in every respect a man like unto us. He was born in the flesh, because the flesh is our lowest and most earthly constituent and carries in it and with it all the possibilities, all the weaknesses and temptations and dangers, in a word all the probation of our earthly life. All these He met fairly and squarely as a man, and as a man was thoroughly proved by them and perfectly approved. Now our Lord did not do that in our nature which no man within the limits of his own nature or by the exercise of only his own powers is capable of doing. He was not holy by nature, nor righteous by the law. The impossibilities of humanity were as much impossibilities for Him as for us. He bare all our weaknesses

and carried all our sorrows. He had as much to hunger and thirst after a righteousness which was not His own as we have, and He did it infinitely more. If He was actually holy and righteous as none but He was or is, it was because He was possessed, and humanly possessed, of a higher secret, a truer way, a more sufficient power, of human holiness and righteousness than human nature in itself contains or human will can by itself acquire. No man ever so felt in himself the deficiency and poverty of mere nature, or ever so confessed in himself the impotency and insufficiency of the human will for the higher purposes of holiness, righteousness, and life, as did Jesus Christ. It is because there was never one who so knew His utter dependence upon God, and therefore so knew what in God He had to depend on, that there was never one but He who so perfectly knew God as our holiness, our righteousness, and our life. But in all this He only knows what He calls us too to the knowledge of in Him, and what He promises us that we shall perfectly share with Him.

Thus, we may conclude, Jesus Christ was indeed holy in our nature, and therefore our nature was holy in Him. But He was holy as a man and in the only way in which a man can be holy. He was holy by the conquest of sin. And this He was and did, as we too must be and do, after Him and in Him, — not within the limits of our own nature, nor by the powers of our own will (and yet not without these too), but through His all-sufficient way of perfect union and unity with God. That means that Jesus Christ is the author to us of

everything else because He was the author and finisher of our faith. The only thing that stands between us and everything else is the absence or the incompleteness of our faith.

XIV

THE TRUE BAPTISM AND BAPTIZER

The point in the ministry of John the Baptist intended in every one of the Gospels to be specially emphasized is not the tremendous positive importance of that ministry as a preparation for Christ, unquestionable as that was, so much as the contrast and disparity so vividly expressed by John himself between his own baptism and that which Jesus after him was to exercise. When we speak of the baptism of John as no true one, and that of Jesus as the only true one, we are using the word true in its deeper New Testament sense. It is not that in our ordinary meaning of it John's baptism was in any way unmeaning or untrue. It contained as much significance and sincerity as the greater Elijah, the last and most intense of the prophets, could put into it. Meaning enough John could put and did put into his baptism. It meant, and it could not have expressed more strongly, the necessity and need of the deepest and the truest repentance. But all the earnestness and sincerity of John the Baptist could not do more than mean and demand the repentance it symbolized and preached. The true baptism needed was one which could not only mean the truth it expressed, but could be the truth it meant.

In other words, we have embodied in John the Baptist all the accumulated fire and intensity of all the Law and the Prophets, and at the same time the sum of all the long experience of their weakness and unprofitableness without a baptism from heaven with something more. The Law and the Prophets could build the altar and lay the wood and place the sacrifice, but it required a greater than Elijah to call down the fire from heaven to consume this sacrifice. When John said, I can only baptize you with water, he expressed the experience of all law and all prophets. We know and can say and can mean what we want; but who or what can give us what we want? It is not in our nature to possess it, it is not within our powers to create or acquire it.

We are made not for sin but for holiness, and not for death but for life. We are constituted by our nature not only capable of conceiving perfect holiness and eternal life, but under a necessity of recognizing these, if we reflect upon ourselves at all, as the true expression of our nature and the true exercise of our powers. And that which thus cannot but be a law to us we can know only as an impossibility. We might on the one hand deny the impossibility, and, with Kant, while recognizing the infinitude of the law, say still, I ought and therefore I can. Or we might, on the other hand, recognizing the infinitude and therefore the impossibility of the law, conclude that it cannot be ours and acquiesce in something lower and more accessible. Let us examine briefly each of these alternatives.

With regard to the first alternative, Kant indeed

postulates for us an eternal time in which to fulfil our infinite law. There is great truth also in the demand that the law is ours and the obedience or fulfilment must therefore be our own. In undertaking human life, in the full meaning of it, we are entering upon an infinite and eternal task. This task must be possible in the end, if there be an end to that which is infinite; or at any rate it must be capable of a real, continuous and eternal, approximation, and be in that sense possible. But even in that sense it will be possible only upon the condition that from the beginning and all along the perfect end is recognized and we mean and intend nothing short of the infinite and the eternal. Every thought and act of life from the beginning must have for its principle and its maxim — not less sin, but no sin at all; and not more holiness, but all the holiness of God. I recognize the fact that the law is ours and the fulfilment of it can be only all our own, and also the fact that an eternal obedience must be possible for us. But what we want to recognize also, and what the Gospel of Jesus Christ reveals to us, is this: that an obedience may be all ours and only ours, and yet be incapable of becoming ours in isolation or apart from that without which we are not even ourselves. Our obedience is not God's but ours; but though it be not God's, yet it is God Himself in us, enabling us to be ourselves and to render to Him what is ours. It is true that the infinite law must be eternally possible for us; there is no *ought* where there is not also a *can*. But neither the nature nor the will of man can discover in itself aught but an actual impos-

sibility of its own true law. Its possibility lies only in the union and unity with God into which humanity is brought in the person of Jesus Christ, and in the union and unity with Christ into which we can be brought only by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The other alternative was to recognize in the infinitude and impossibility of the law its inapplicability to ourselves, and to come down to some standard or measure of life which we feel to be practicable and attainable. Can we do so and remain ourselves — even the selves to which we have attained? Suppose we should succeed in dropping out of our lives the call to the infinite and the eternal; suppose we should successfully suppress in ourselves all yearning or aspiration after anything more than we actually are or can make ourselves; suppose we should thus limit and confine our thoughts, our hopes, and ourselves to what many declare to be the only realities and values of human life or destiny; — if this result were universally reached, should we still be, and continue to be, even the inchoate and imperfect men we are now? No; even if this be the truth and the fact with regard to human life, we still need to cling to our illusions, for it is these illusions alone that ennoble us with what truth or beauty or goodness above ourselves is in us.

There is no one who reflects or cares who does not in his way believe in, and in his measure practise, both repentance and faith. He knows dissatisfaction with what he is; he knows that there is the better, the best, which he is not — and would be. It was a profound thought of Plato, that all men will The Good, — not

the relative but the absolute good. However appetite, desire, passion may crave and choose the bad, in the inner man, which is the true self of every man, there is a will which is "of the good." What is that good? Is it only something a little better, or even a great deal better, than we are? No; it is to be wholly, completely, perfectly better than we are. Suppose that our Lord, in the Sermon on the Mount, had preached a practicable or attainable righteousness, such as we have been talking about; suppose He had called us to follow Him and be just as free from sin and as holy as all of us are able to be; and had not, on the contrary, bidden us follow Him infinitely higher than that, and be perfect even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect; — would He in that case have preached a more truly human Gospel, or have more powerfully drawn all men unto Him?

To us all, if we be men, and just in proportion as we are men, both repentance and faith are a very great deal more than we realize. Who does not know dissatisfaction, sorrow, condemnation, negation, within himself, of himself? The point is, not only what all this means, but how much does it mean to us of what it must mean, and cannot mean less than, in itself. I repent of what I am that is sinful. Of how much do I repent, and how much do I repent of it? Do I repent of all or of part of my sinfulness, and do I wholly or only partially repent of it? Surely repentance, if it is repentance at all, must repent of sin as sin and of any and all sin. And equally surely it cannot mean the more or less, the partial, but must mean the whole

putting away of sin. Everything is defined by its end and there can be no other end or final cause or meaning of repentance than the putting away of sin, — all sin and a real and complete putting away. Now this paradox or antinomy within us, that only a completed holiness can be the meaning from the beginning or the full expression in the end of ourselves, and yet that such a holiness is something hopelessly unattainable by us, finds its perfect solution and reconciliation only in Jesus Christ. This we shall hope to make clear as we proceed further; but there is one point which I wish to reiterate as a matter of the verbal interpretation of the passage which we have been for some time considering.

That which is desiderated in human salvation; that which made the law and the prophets, and which makes all Law and all Prophets, ineffectual, however true their meaning and earnest their purpose; that which necessitated and necessitates the true Baptizer and the true Baptism, is not that men have not always and everywhere known something of God and something of themselves, something of sin and something of holiness, something of repentance and something of faith, — but that the more they have known of all these, the more they have felt that antinomy between what they ought and what they can. We have repentance, but how may we, how can we, — no man can, — repent *unto* the putting away of sin? We have faith, but who of us can believe *unto* the limit, the end, eternal life? What we want is an effectual repentance, a repentance which not only means, but is, the putting away of sin. Or — what is only the reverse of the

other — a faith which not only means the putting on, but which puts on, holiness and eternal life. The answer to this one need of human life is to be found only in Him whom God did exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance and remission of sins. Jesus Christ both is in Himself and is to us the divine gift of such a repentance as *is*, as actually accomplishes, the putting away of sin; and of such a faith as is, as actually attains unto, holiness and eternal life.

I say that, first, Jesus Christ is in Himself the perfect *metanoia* and the perfect *pistis*. He is that perfect attitude of humanity toward sin which *is* its putting away, both the death of us to it and the death of it in us. He is that perfect attitude of humanity toward God and holiness and eternal life which is the putting on and possession of all these. In Jesus Christ humanity has accomplished its salvation through the perfection of all those dispositions and acts and characters which effect and constitute salvation. In Him it has thrown off its old self of deficiency and insufficiency, of weakness and sin and death, and put on a new self which is more itself than before, just because it is itself not in itself but in God. I repeat that salvation, to be a real salvation and human salvation, the only salvation either needful or possible for us, must be an act of humanity itself, the perfection of its own negation, renunciation, and annulling of all from which it needs to be saved, and of its own affirmation, appropriation, and realization of all to which it needs to be saved. Nothing that God can do merely for us,

not even anything that God alone can do in us, can effect or constitute our salvation. Only that can be our salvation which we ourselves are, and are through our own doing and becoming. But we can do nothing and become nothing and be nothing that effects or constitutes salvation in ourselves or otherwise than in and through God, who alone is our true and perfect self. Jesus Christ — viewed now wholly on His human side — is humanity in that perfect relation to God which is the condition of its perfect life in God. This perfection of relation and of activity with and in God enables humanity in His person to do that which otherwise it is weak through the flesh, in its own nature or in itself, to do. It enables it to carry to the limit both its negation of sin and its affirmation of holiness, to attain the *metanoia* unto death and the *pistis* unto life. When therefore we say that Jesus Christ is the author and finisher, the beginner and ender, of our faith, we mean that He is the perfecter in His own human life of all those dispositions, attitudes, habits, of all that divine human character, through which we need to work out, and in which we shall possess and enjoy, our own salvation. All the types and promises of the Old Testament point out the truth that if it is humanity that is to inherit, it is humanity that in its spiritual history was to work out its own inheritance. It was the woman's seed that in the end was to bruise the serpent's head. It was Abraham's seed, the perfect inheritor not of his blood but of his faith, that was to receive the promises. To all the promises Christ and humanity are synonymous. All that was to be

done or received by it was done or received in Him. All that was fulfilled in Him was fulfilled in its name and by it in His person. Thus the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of a promise made not to angels, but to man or humanity, of headship over the world that was to come. And this promise we see not yet fulfilled in him or it, not yet in humanity, but we see One already exalted to that headship in whom in anticipation all are exalted. One has suffered and been perfected, has tasted death and inherited life, but that One only as the leader and captain of all: It became Him, for whom and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect (first) the captain of their salvation through sufferings.

In the second place, all that Jesus Christ was and is in Himself, of accomplished and completed *metanoia* and *pistis*, of perfected death to sin and life to God, all *that* He is to us and is to be in us. What is preached to us in His name — that is to say, what is preached to us as ours in Him — is the repentance unto remission, the perfect putting away of our sin, upon which our salvation depends. We take this to be ours in Him, as we have already seen, in two senses, or rather in two stages of one and the same sense. In the first sense we see ourselves made actually and perfectly sinless and holy in Jesus Christ. We see in Him that perfect relation to God and that perfect activity in God which for us as for Him is in itself holiness and eternal life. More definitely, and as the consequence of that, we see in Him that completed attitude to sin that is the very death of it and to it, and that perfected attitude to God

and holiness that is their real possession — which is the substance and matter of all that must be ours in order to be saved. It is true we see this actual holiness, this completed salvation, as ours in the totality only and the eternity of our relation to Christ, in the realization of all that is ours in Him. But, however far off it may be from us or we from it, we cannot and ought not to think of our salvation as anything less than our own perfected and completed sinlessness and holiness. We may be to the depths of our souls grateful and happy to be sinners pardoned and forgiven by divine grace. But surely God would not have us satisfied with that as the end and substance of the salvation He gives us in His Son. Jesus Christ is the power of God in us unto salvation. It does not require an exercise of divine power to extend pardon; it does require it to endow and enable us with all the qualities, energies, and activities that make for and that make holiness and life. See how St. Paul speaks of it when he prays, That we may know the exceeding greatness of God's power to usward who believe, according to that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. The victory of our Lord over sin and death as manifested in His resurrection was an exercise on His part of a spiritual divine power which no enemy was able to withstand. St. Paul wishes us to understand by experience that in Christ we are the subjects of that selfsame divine power unto the perfection of holiness and the completeness of life.

But, as has been already in part explained, there is

another sense in which we view as ours the putting away of sin in Jesus Christ. And, although this other is a lower and only a preliminary or anticipatory sense, yet it is one which more immediately concerns us, and which for that reason occupies much of the attention of the New Testament interpreters of the work of Christ. Our progressive and final real oneness with God depends no little, indeed depends altogether, upon our provisional status and relation with Him in and during the process of that unification. The wandering of the prodigal son was a spiritual and not merely local or material one. What he wanted for his real return was an internal or subjective reconciliation and restoration to unity with his father. But if the external return had not taken place and the external status of father and son been restored first, there could not have come about the gradual healing and growth of internal and real unity. Above all things, such an essentially spiritual and personal relation as that of father and son demands that the objective status should first exist in order that the subjective spirit of sonship should come into existence by being born of it and nourished by it. Because we *are* sons, God sends forth the spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father. That is to say, God has first in Jesus Christ established an objective status or relation of sons. Into this He receives us by an act of grace on His part and through no act on ours. He then expects us in this objective status or relation of pure grace to appropriate to ourselves the relation He has conferred upon us, to make ourselves what He has made us, to enter into the spirit

and life of the sonship which is ours and become inwardly the sons that we are outwardly in Christ Jesus. God's part precedes and conditions and produces ours in the work of our salvation. He not only is by nature, but He has made Himself by grace, our Father before and in order that we may make ourselves His sons by faith. We love Him as Father because He first loved us as children. Faith does not originate or create or give, it only receives and appropriates and realizes. Just as God calls things that are not as though they were, because His calling makes them so, even so faith accepts things as He calls them, and in accepting finds them so. The father received his prodigal son upon the terms not of a prodigal, but of a son in good standing; he made it for him as though he had never sinned and were not in fact a sinner against his love and goodness; by the very act of accepting and treating him as though his offence were not, he most effectually removed not only the imputation, but all inhering reality of that offence. And the son himself, in and by most completely accepting and appropriating the status of perfect sonship into which he was received, most effectually restored himself to the perfect spirit and internal character of sonship.

But in the above illustration, the essential condition of the reconciliation and accomplished unity of father and son was a complete right disposition and attitude on both sides in the matter. There must be on the side of the father the willingness to accept at once, not all that was due from the son, but the right attitude possible for him at the time toward what he had been

and what he would be. And there must be on the part of the son the readiness to bring no less than this. Without this much there is nothing to go on, nothing that can be given or received. Bringing the matter back to our relation to God, we cannot indeed bring to Him at once a sin completely put away and a oneness with Him restored, but we can bring to Him an attitude toward our sin which means and can never be satisfied with less than its complete putting away; and we can bring an attitude toward holiness which means and can never stop short of the most perfect actual attainment of the most perfect holiness. If we do in reality and in sincerity bring this, then God can treat what we really mean and intend as though it really were, and by treating them so or calling them so make them so. But if, on the contrary, we do not in all sincerity and reality mean or intend so, then God cannot call it so, nor by calling make it so. For God can give only what we can receive, and we can receive only what we are in condition to receive, viz.: what we fully know and feel the want of and what we truly desire and will and purpose the possession of.

The true or real baptism, then, is the endowment from above with that without which we cannot be ourselves or fulfil our law or accomplish the end of our lives. Jesus Christ was, first, the True Baptized. There was in Him all that humanity lacks in itself for self-realization: the perfect relation to God, the perfect oneness with God in person and in work, the consequent power through an effectual *metanoia* and *pistis*, and the divine grace fully operative through these, to

throw off sin and put on holiness. I do not see but that our Lord's own baptism from heaven was identical with the anointing which constituted Him the Christ, the impartation to humanity in His person of all of which it was deficient by nature and for which it was insufficient in the exercise of its own will or energies. He is thus earth wedded with heaven, man supplemented and completed by God, the divine Word and Spirit, truth and love, holiness and righteousness and eternal life, realized and embodied in creation. And being the true baptized, Jesus Christ is the True Baptizer. He brings us into His own relation with the Father, associates us with Himself in His own sonship, and imparts to us the communion and fellowship of His own filial Spirit. He is thus not only our Christ but our chrism; the precious oil poured out upon His head runs down to the borders of His garment, and anoints His whole mystical person, which is the body of redeemed and sanctified humanity. He is our baptizer because He is our baptism. All that He has become for us He becomes in us by incorporating us into Himself and endowing us with all the grace and power of what He Himself is.

XV

THE RESURRECTION

We have now, I think, the material for the Christian interpretation of the work of Christ. Our Lord says at the very last that He has glorified God in that He has accomplished the *ergon* or task which God had given Him to do. That task or work had been a life-whole and a life-long one, but it was completed in His death and consummated in His resurrection. We have come now to sum up all that has been said in an attempt to define as precisely as we can the meaning of the resurrection as the consummation of the work.

It is St. Paul who first in Christianity undertook to interpret the whole spiritual significance of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But I hope before we are quite done to demonstrate that the entire logical development of St. Paul's doctrine is from a germ inherent and essential in the truth itself, that it was distinctly stated by our Lord Himself, and that it was the germinal teaching of the Apostles before St. Paul. In doing so, I shall have to recall and correlate the principal conclusions already reached. The Gospel as such begins with the objective fact of the taking or putting away of sin by Jesus Christ. It proceeds with the universal proclamation of the double

remission in His name, a remission of present pardon through faith in Him, and a remission of real deliverance through final participation with Him. The difference between the two is only that of different stages of relation to the same thing, between the proleptic or anticipatory appropriation of faith and the progressive and final appropriation and fruition in fact. What in its totality is included in the accomplished work of our Lord, and now preached to us in His name, is that He has in Himself abolished sin and death, and that we may, in faith now, and more and more — unto ultimate perfection — in fact, see in Him the consummation of our redemption from sin and death. It is just this truth, as I hope to show, which is expanded into the entire doctrinal system of St. Paul. But it had been already preached in principle by the Apostles from Jerusalem.

It is usually said that St. Paul knows nothing and cares nothing for the earthly life of Jesus, that all his interest and concern is with the resurrection and the risen life. The fact is, I think, that St. Paul is the first to understand and interpret that life. The earlier evangelists are mostly recorders of the mere words and acts of Jesus. As has been shown, for Jesus Himself the significant and determining facts of His human life and character had mostly taken place before His ministry was begun and His disciples brought into intimate association and acquaintance with Him. Thenceforth He and they are taken up with His public relations and dealings. They do record personal experiences of His, such as the temptations that begin

and end His career, but generally the mystery of Himself, of His elevation above themselves, of His exalted authority and personal claims, they simply accept in their actuality, and make no effort to explain. St. Paul, on the contrary, sums up all the details of our Lord's life and focuses them in the one luminous act in which they manifest their eternal significance. To him the individual personal life of Jesus Himself is more than it is to any one else, but all of it was gathered up and expressed in the one consummate act of His death, as all the fruits of it were contained in the comprehensive fact of His resurrection. While to the Synoptists the incidents of the end are visible and phenomenal, to St. Paul they are invisible, spiritual, and eternal. They see mainly the external facts of an actual physical death and resurrection; he sees these too, but what he sees in them is the final scene only of a lifelong encounter with sin and an ultimate complete victory over it. In that He died, the death that He died, He died to sin; does not that carry with it an interpretation of the whole earthly career of Jesus, humanity's champion against the dark mystery of evil? In that He liveth, He liveth unto God; does not that contain in it the sum of all that was done and was won in the life and the death?

The question with us, then, is that of a purely spiritual interpretation of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, divested at present of any connection with physical or physiological considerations involved. So, dissevered from lower complications, and regarded only in its higher connection and context, our interpretation

will proceed on the following lines: The death and resurrection, taken together as one, is a spiritual act at once of consummated holiness and completed or perfected life. In that act humanity has accomplished its end and reached its goal. Studied from below upward, first on the human and then on the divine side of it, it is in the first place the supreme act of the faith that was to, and that in that act did, overcome the world. The promise was, away back, made to faith that it should be the heir of the divine blessing or blessedness. But the faith that should inherit could, in the nature of it, that it should be faith, be nothing else or less than a faith that could be tried to the uttermost, and that could survive to the uttermost. The Old Testament is the story of the evolution of faith. It is a picture of faith in all stages and in all phases. Everywhere the essence and the measure of faith is the power to suffer and to live. It must again and again have the sentence of death not only passed but executed upon it, but it must be of such a nature that death itself cannot destroy it. A faith that death can kill is not faith, because faith is in God who quickeneth the dead. The faith of individuals or of the nation in the Old Testament is a faith that dies often and yet that never dies. It survives not only all other lesser ills, but even the unsparing judgments brought upon itself by its failures and sins. Well indeed might Jesus declare that the whole spiritual teaching and illustration of the Scriptures from beginning to end is one long object-lesson of death and resurrection. Well might He more particularly say, Thus it is written, that the

Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead. For who is the Christ but the spiritual man, the man of the perfect faith, and so of the perfect grace, and so again of the perfected life. The Christ is humanity anointed through faith with the grace of a risen and regenerate life. Jesus Christ is thus the true author and finisher and completer of that faith which overcomes the world and surmounts all the counter-conditions of human life and destiny. If we reflect but a moment upon it, and the more and more we reflect, we shall see that Jesus could have achieved what He did and have attained what he is, humanly, only on the one hand by the faith that overcame and survived the final evil, and on the other hand by the supreme trial that not only proved but perfected His faith.

Humanly, then, the death and resurrection of Jesus was the supreme act of faith by which humanity first completely realized itself in God. From the divine side it was, in the second place, the supreme act of grace by which God first completely realized Himself in man. It is equally true that Jesus Christ raised Himself from the dead by His faith in God, and that God raised Him from the dead by His grace in Him. Neither the raising nor the rising from the dead is primarily or essentially a physical act or fact. It is a spiritual thing, a matter of the mind, of the affections, of the will, and so of the whole personal life. The man who knows, loves, wills, and lives God is risen from the dead. What shall take place in his body after that is a mere consequence and incident. But in order that a man shall be so risen he has to put away sin which

stands between him and God, and so, by consequence, death which stands between him and life. This, we have seen abundantly, he cannot do within the limitations of his own nature, nor within the operations or possibilities of his own will. For it he must be in such relation or correspondence with God as that divine forces and energies shall be at work in him. These forces and energies are not mechanical, and they do not work mechanically in us. God does not raise from the dead by mere *fiat*, or by exercise of omnipotence. He gives us the truth, the spiritual and moral beauty, the divine goodness, which if we truly know and love and do will be our resurrection from sin and death. It is not *any* truth, beauty, or goodness, or these things in any way that we may be able or may happen to conceive them, that will be our salvation. The particular truth spoken of is the truth of ourselves, and that is not any thing but only one thing, God's truth of us, the truth of the divine foreknowledge and predestination. As God sees us, as He has eternally foreseen and purposed us, so has He manifested us to ourselves in Jesus Christ. If we will see ourselves in Him, and purpose ourselves in Him, and so finally realize ourselves in Him; if we seek and find in Him the truth for our minds, the beauty for our hearts, the good and goodness of our wills and lives, then in doing so and in having done so shall we attain the freedom and perfection of life which is in itself our salvation.

There is in the word grace something of the ambiguity or the duality which we have observed in other terms. It sometimes expresses an external state

or status into which we have been objectively brought by an act not our own. And then again it signifies an internal operation subjectively wrought in us not by ourselves, or by us not in our own power. The explanation is that the gift or grace of God in the Gospel is a conjoint act first of His Word and secondly of His Spirit. The Word is, in the very meaning of it, an objective expression and conveyance to us of what constitutes our salvation. We see, love, and accept it as a thing outside ourself — not yet our own because it is still in another and not in ourselves, and yet our own because the other has pronounced it and our faith has objectively and proleptically made it our own. In this way, in Jesus Christ, who is the divine Word to us of our completed salvation, we are in a state or status of grace. There has been given to us and received by us a salvation not our own, and yet our own, not our own in subjective fact but our own by objective divine right and title which to faith is equivalent to fact. Such is the grace of the Word, the grace of the objective giving and the objective receiving. On the other hand, the grace of the Spirit is that of a subjective both giving and receiving. It is the operation within us, ourselves and not ourselves, by which what is *de jure* ours is made *de facto* ours. The point to be remembered and kept, as distinctive of the word grace and of the thing expressed by it, is that as in the grace of the Word there is a gift not from ourselves, so in the grace of the Spirit there is a reception not by ourselves. Our Lord Himself makes much of the fact that it is only God within us that can make us

receptive of God without us; no man can come to the Word except he be drawn by the Spirit.

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a demonstration, not only of the human receptive and responsive power of faith, but also of the divine communicative and enabling power of grace. Attention was called to the fact that while our Lord's entire experience in the flesh was a human one, there was yet that in it which transcends all other human experience upon earth. While all other experiences can never get beyond the fact of still inhering sin, but the more they advance in holiness are only the more conscious of the sin that still remains, there is ever in Jesus the fact and the consciousness of having transcended any experience of sin. The existence of that fact is the demonstration of the existence and actual operation in Him of the superhuman power by which it was accomplished. The victory of faith is the victory in reality, not of faith, but of that which operates in and through faith. Faith is but the condition, grace is the source and the cause of all in us that is not of ourselves, and consequently of all holiness or eternal life. Because faith existed perfectly in Jesus Christ, therefore grace wrought through Him perfectly. God could accomplish and did accomplish in Him His perfect work, and that perfect work consisted in the death that was a resurrection, the resurrection not only actually of humanity in Him, but potentially of humanity with Him. This will bring us to the third sense of the death and resurrection.

Because the resurrection of Jesus was the completed

triumph of human faith in God and so of divine grace in man, therefore it is as to its meaning and content the consummation of all that it is the end of faith to seek or the function of grace to impart. And so the death and resurrection taken as one is the complete attitude toward evil which attains to its putting away, and on the other hand, or as its obverse, the completed attitude toward God and holiness which is the perfect putting on and possession of them. Therefore it is that as our Lord had summed up all in His last word and made the fruit of His work the substance of His gift, so from that moment what was preached in His name was an accomplished and adequate repentance and a completed remission and redemption. Jesus Christ dead and risen is the realization and manifestation at once of the divine grace that imparts, the human faith that receives and assimilates, and the holiness, righteousness, and life that result.

There are one or two New Testament passages by which I would illustrate the spiritual interpretation of the resurrection given above. St. Paul opens the epistle to the Romans with a very exact definition of the Gospel as he understands it. The Gospel, according to his statement, is the Gospel of God, concerning His Son. And then he proceeds to define and describe the divine sonship realized in Jesus as constituting the essential principle and truth of the Gospel. The sonship described is, as we shall see clearly, a sonship of humanity, first attained by it in His person, and attained by a process which is traced out for us with great distinctness. Jesus Christ, according to the flesh, on the

natural side, in the whole phenomenon of what He was by virtue of His human nature, came of the seed of David. But according to the spirit, or on the spiritual side, in the entire phenomenon of His spiritual manifestation, He was the son of God. In His own person as man there was necessity of the double birth, if He was to be a member not only of the kingdom of earth, but of that of heaven. Now how did He (humanly) become son of God, or by what process was He so *determined?* Did he become so by an act of God-determination, or by an act of self-determination, or by both? In so far as He was determined to sonship by the act or operation of the divine grace in Him, He was God-determined. In so far as He was determined to it by His own act or activity of faith in the divine grace, He was self-determined. The determination to sonship is the joint act or operation of God in man and of man in God. That Jesus Himself in His entireness of human experience was so determined to the sonship He achieved for us will be demonstrated by what follows. We may only remark in passing that, as spoken of in the New Testament, human sonship to God is not matter of original nature or of inherited nature, but of acquired nature. Indeed our entire spiritual nature as such is necessarily self-acquired. It means what *we* are by our own self-determination, although — as in this case — the determination of ourselves may be dependent upon God's determination of us.

Jesus Christ, St. Paul goes on to say, was determined Son of God — in what respect? What was it that the perfect grace of God through His perfect faith as man

added to Him to complete and constitute His human sonship? It was just that which humanity lacked and needed in itself in order to become sons — the *power* to become. In order to become sons of God it was necessary for men to throw off what in themselves was alien to the divine nature, and to receive from without themselves what was necessary to kinship with it. This could be accomplished only by an adequate *metanoia* and a sufficient faith. And that was just what the last representative of law or prophets had testified to human incapacity for, without a new baptism with spirit and power from above. Jesus Christ was humanity just so baptized; and in consequence of that baptism He was Son of God *with power.*

That the above is the true definition of the power with which Jesus was determined and constituted Son of God is proved by the following words: Determined Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness. The power was distinctly a spiritual one, and it manifested itself in an accomplished sinlessness or holiness. According to the spirit may mean the human spirit, as St. Paul especially contradistinguishes in us the spirit from the flesh. The flesh is all that we are by nature or of ourselves, the spirit is what we are by relation with God and personal communication from Him. Or the spirit may mean the Spirit of God as manifested in our spirit. It really means both, because it is only in our spirit, that is, in what we are, that the Spirit of God can manifest Himself in us, and equally our spirit is dead for holiness without the Spirit of God. It is only as the human and the divine are at one and

are one that we can be possessors of that holiness which is the divine nature and which constitutes us sons of God. It is impossible, I think, to read even the Gospel of St. John without perceiving that Jesus dwells in the main upon His human relation to the Father, upon the sonship into which He has come by the perfection of His attitude toward God in recognition of and response to that of God toward Him. And indeed it cannot but be so, because He can be light or life, or way of life, to us only in what He as we became, and we in Him may become.

The important point for our argument remains to be noticed. All the divine determination and self-determination of Jesus Christ as son, with power, according to the spirit of holiness, is the outcome of His resurrection from the dead. He was, as the Epistle to the Hebrews describes Him, Son perfected forevermore — by the things He had suffered and done. Humanity became son of God by His act and in His person. He was that death to sin and life to God, by which old things passed away and new things came into being, by which humanity was born through death into life. The Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, refers for Jesus not to the day of His human birth, but to the day of His resurrection. The sonship created and manifested by and in Him was not mere fact of the former, but was the perfect act of the latter. It was not on Christmas Day but on Easter that He was born, for whom we remember no more the pangs of His birth for joy that a man is born into the world.

For that man is the new humanity, and in His birth we all were born sons of God.

I will adventure one more illustration from the New Testament of the spiritual interpretation of the death and resurrection of our Lord. St. John in the last chapter of his first epistle is speaking of the faith that overcomes the world, and he gives a specific definition of that faith in the words, Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the son of God? Our Lord in His latest words, according to St. John, had comforted His disciples with the assurance, In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. It is implied that His victory is theirs, and that in Him they too should overcome. Accordingly, to St. John in the epistle faith not merely in the word of Jesus but in the accomplished fact of His victory over the world is our victory over the world. But what is that victory? It consists in the act and fact of attained or accomplished sonship to God. We can overcome the world only by being no longer of the world but of God. He that believes in the sonship of Jesus believes in his own sonship in Jesus, and in realizing that sonship in faith realizes it in fact, and so overcomes the world. St. John proceeds then to give the genesis of human sonship to God as it had been realized in the person of Jesus Christ Himself: This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not in the water only, but in the water and in the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit

and the water and the blood; and these three agree in one.

This account of the three witnesses has baffled all effort at conclusive interpretation, but we may reflect profitably upon some points in it. When or how or in what respect can Jesus be said to have come by water and blood? Surely not as to Himself, in either the divine or the human aspect of Him. The context shows that this coming is in the character and capacity of human sonship to God: Who is he that overcometh, but he that believeth that Jesus is the son of God? *This* is he that came. . . . It is the realized human sonship that came in the water and in the blood. There is some doubt as to what may be meant by the water; there can be none as to the meaning of the blood. It is most probable that St. John, having reference to the gradual perfecting and completion of our Lord's human relationship to the Father, specifies the two salient and critical points of that process, the baptism and the crucifixion. Without prejudice to other senses of a previous or already existing sonship, there is a sense in which we may say that Jesus was son of God by baptism. Baptism means the act of being born from above which constitutes our sonship to God. The true and complete act in which human regeneration was first realized was the anointing or baptism from heaven which made Jesus the Christ. At the baptism of Jesus the heavens were opened and the voice of God pronounced Him the beloved son in whom He was well pleased. In whatever sense Jesus in His humanity may or may not have been "made" son of God by His

baptism, it is certain that in that act He received most direct testimony or witness from God to the fact and character or quality of His sonship; and we must remember that in the passage before us St. John is speaking of the water, the blood, and the Spirit as not only the three *media*, but the three witnesses of the coming of the son of God. Not in the water only, says the Apostle. The coming in the water of baptism is only an initial coming; it is the act of self-devotion, and of the divine consecration or anointing with which our sonship begins. It is the putting on of the armor, between which and the putting it off there is no little to be done. The baptism of Jesus was no meaningless form or unreality to Him. It drove Him into the wilderness to prepare through agony of temptation for what He had taken upon Himself or what God had put upon Him. He undertook in water what He was to execute in blood. Jesus Himself always connected by the common term the two baptisms of water and of blood, and so saw the fulfilment of the former in the execution of the latter. So every baptism in His name begins in water, but is completed only in the blood of the perfect death to sin. This then is He who, as author and completer of our regeneration or divine sonship, of our death into life and life out of death, came not only in the consecration to sonship in the water of Jordan, but in the realization of sonship through the blood of Calvary. But the water or the blood was neither in itself, nor both together, sufficient witness. It is the Spirit in both that is the truth, that constitutes the reality. It is not our baptism, but what our bap-

tism is to us and in us, that is the truth or the reality of it. And it was not the blood as such of even the death on Calvary; it was the blood as symbol and actual expression of the Eternal Spirit in which and through which the life was offered up without spot to God. It was the eternal spirit of it all that made that particular crucifixion what it was, that converted that particular death into a resurrection unto eternal life. So, all uniting in and taken together as one, they make up God's triple witness concerning His Son. And that witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life.

As the sonship was a resurrection sonship, so the life is distinctively a resurrection life. It looks back to, it is conditioned upon, it rests on, the truth of the initial water and the consummating blood. That is to say, it must have begun with a whole-minded and whole-hearted act of self-consecration to God, involving a repentance *unto* the putting away of sin and a faith that means and that will be holiness; our life must accept and intend all that was accomplished in that of our Lord, and that is expressed in His death and resurrection. And what was meant in the water must be consummated and realized in the blood. We must in the end have ourselves in the perfection of our repentance died to sin and in the perfection of our faith risen into life. The completed transition from death into life can to any profit have taken place in another for us only as by baptism with His spirit it can be effectuated in ourselves in Him.

PART THIRD

THE GOSPEL OF THE PERSON

OR

THE INCARNATION

XVI

THE PROBLEM OF THE PERSON

An adequate interpretation of the work of Jesus Christ cannot but involve and raise a question as to His personality. We have either to lower our conception of the work or else to elevate the matter of His person to the height of an unavoidable and all-important problem. We have summed up the catholic or practically universal interpretation of the work in the one word — the resurrection. But to that word we have attributed a far wider signification than is apparent to any one who does not see it through the whole mind of the New Testament. It is true that we profess here to be interpreting only the Gospels, but it would be absurd, in doing so, to limit our attention so exclusively to the Gospels themselves as to ignore the way in which they were understood by the Christian mind of the time. Our only concern must be to interpret the Gospels themselves as exactly and correctly as we can, and if in this we are assisted to the truth by the mind of St. Paul, for example, so much the greater gain. The only thing to be guarded against is the possibility, in that case, of importing from St. Paul or any other extraneous source an interpretation which is not at least implicitly the meaning or truth of the Gospels.

If it is the truth, it is so much the better that it is also the mind of St. Paul.

The resurrection, then, means to us so infinitely more than the physical or physiological puzzle of the resuscitation of a dead person, that the acknowledged and perhaps insoluble difficulties involved in that practically do not disturb one who appreciates and measures the spiritual significance and necessity of the fact. Christianity has permitted itself to be so mixed up with and embarrassed by the natural aspects of the case, that it has weakened its grasp upon the true fulness and incontestability of the spiritual truth and proof of the resurrection. For my part, and I think in the interest of spiritual rather than of physical science — though I believe them to be one — I fully share the current prejudice against mere miracle (at any rate as we have been understanding it) as explanation for any phenomenon. I should very much prefer to believe that in what we call the miracles of our Lord, and especially in the momentous fact of the resurrection, there is manifested some higher natural working than we have as yet been able to correlate with what we so far know of nature. I am loath to believe that what I consider the most significant, beneficent, and interpretative event in creation should have been interjected into it as an interference or amendment. But at any rate Christianity, I think, can afford to leave to a lower science what of puzzle there is in reconciling the differing and often seemingly conflicting spheres of the spiritual and the physical in human experience. The problem, for example, of the reconciliation of

personal freedom and natural causation will probably never be solved, and yet the facts will forever continue.

What then, let us recall, is the fuller significance of the resurrection? As the death of Jesus, in its spiritual aspect, was not the fact of a moment but the act of a lifetime, as the cross went with Him from the cradle to the grave, and through every minute of every day — as also, He said, it should accompany us, — so also was the resurrection of our Lord a continuous and unbroken act and fact of His whole life. It was a consistent breaking through or transcending the limitations that bind "all us the rest" in the universal subjection to sin and death. The work of Jesus was the fact of His holiness, and every moment of His holiness was an act of resurrection, inasmuch as it was a raising our common nature out of and above its natural state or activity. The death habitually spoken of in the New Testament, at any rate in its higher teachings, is not a physical event. It may and does involve that too, sooner or later, but even physical death, strictly as such, always presupposes an interior spiritual death. Not, I think, that even St. Paul believes that but for the entrance of sin there would not have been the natural change of death; only that that natural change would not without sin have been the dark thing we now, in consequence of sin, know as death. Rather would it have been a change and an awakening, a second birth into a higher life. Sin is not the cause of death as a natural change, it only makes it death in the unnatural evil and dread of it. So it is only the sting and curse of death. Extract the sting, remove the curse,

and death ceases to be death in its bad sense, and becomes only a release and rest from the sorrows of this world and a blessed entrance upon the activities and joys of another. And that other is not a future world only, but an ever present one. It is the kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven which was established in this world by our Lord's life work in it. It is the kingdom of which He Himself said that no one could see it or enter into it except by a new birth from above, a birth which is potentially the whole of the death to sin and the resurrection to holiness and God. All transference or translation of us from the kingdom of nature and ourselves into that of God or of heaven, all the life of grace in us enabling us to be that which by nature or ourselves we could not be, is the result of a new birth which is in effect a death and a resurrection. Jesus Christ accomplished the kingdom of God when humanity in His person destroyed and left behind it the whole long dominion and supremacy of sin. In the destruction of that great first enemy, the last enemy too was practically destroyed. He who had overcome sin could not be holden of death. The resurrection to holiness through the breaking of the power of sin was the forerunner and condition of the resurrection to life through the breaking the bands of death.

I do not see how the supreme spiritual fact of the resurrection in the totality of its meaning could have been given to the world otherwise than by the palpable and vivid testimony of His physical reappearance after death, any more than I can see how His divine authority and power to save could have been impressed upon

the faith of the world otherwise than by the evidence of what might without irreverence be called the machinery of His miraculous bodily healings. Yet in these latter we are obliged to distinguish between what was accidental and temporary and exceptional and what was essential, permanent, and universal. We know very well now what this latter consists in: Jesus Christ is in the world with authority and power to put away sin and death and to communicate holiness and eternal life. This is the *ergon* which the Father sent Him into the world to accomplish, and the perpetual actual accomplishing of which was to be His divine credential. Now, no one can say that the bringing of dead men back to physical or natural life again, or even of sick men to physical health again by other than natural means, is any part of the essential, permanent, and universal health and life giving work of Christ. Whatever necessary purpose those miracles served was an occasional, temporary, and non-essential one and ought not to be included in the permanent operation of our religion. Just so have we to recognize in the particular and probative resurrection of Jesus Himself elements and circumstances that were exceptional and that are no permanent part of that resurrection of humanity of which He was first-fruit and author. It is a part of that general truth enunciated by Irenæus when he says that our Lord *in se recapitulat longam expositionem hominis.* The whole process of death and resurrection, of regeneration, and of eternal life instituted and inaugurated by Jesus Christ is in the higher and the highest sense a natural one. It includes not

only the beginnings of spiritual life here, but the completion of physical or natural life hereafter. But the birth and transition and transformation from the natural which we know to the spiritual or higher-natural which as yet, in what it shall be, we do not know, we yet do know this much about, that it is as natural as any other of the changes by which all life in the creation of God passes from stage to stage and from glory to glory. Now the human transitions of Jesus, the changes undergone or accomplished by humanity in His person, as from sin to holiness and from death to life, or more exactly from subjection to the law of sin and death to the freedom and life of holiness, or of the sons of God, — these transitions in Him are not subject to the conditions and laws of change in the same way as in us. They are marked by features which are exceptional in His case. I have already called attention to the fact that whereas in our ordinary experience no one attains to a higher approximation to the divine nature or holiness than is marked by a more sensitive consciousness of still inhering difference or sin, Jesus as the great exception transcends that experience and attains here on earth a perfect oneness with the Father, the limit and goal of accomplished sonship. And so here again, whereas all we the rest, in our passage through the grave and gate of death into the fulness of the completed life, have to pass through we know not what necessary and universal process of natural transformation, Jesus within three, or forty, days has accomplished the entire process and is elevated in His humanity to the complete life of finished sonship.

What I have to say about this at present is not in the way of, perhaps for us impossible, explanation. It is only to suggest that there are two aspects and modes of treatment of the unique or the exceptional in the human experience of Jesus. There is on the one hand a physical exceptional and on the other a spiritual exceptional. With regard to the former, the difficulty is a natural and therefore a scientific one. The only question for religion is whether we shall permit the overwhelming spiritual probability with which through all the life of Jesus we have come at last to the necessity of His resurrection to be met and overcome by the physical impossibility or improbability which it seems to us, in our ignorance, to involve. If our faith and our spiritual appreciation of the invisible all-important and all-inclusive truth be as great as, I think, its object requires and justifies, then I think we shall be able to pass by the natural and scientific difficulties as exceptional, and — so far at least as our own interest or part in the resurrection is concerned — non-essential. Certainly in our present effort to express what the Gospel professes to be, and what we find it to be, to us, we may excuse ourselves from the *parergon*, or side issue, of reconciling the facts of the spirit with those of matter.

The spiritual uniqueness or exceptionality in the case of Jesus we cannot so pass by. It is as much a miracle in the sphere of the spiritual as the other is in that of the natural. The attempt to explain it, which Christianity can in no way evade or avoid, is only an effort to so account for it as to divest it of the feature

of miracle in the objectionable sense. When our Lord set up claims that were offensive to His adversaries among the Jews, it was quite legitimate for them to raise the point, Who art thou, or Whom makest thou thyself, that thou makest such claims? If our Lord did exceptional things, then He was an exceptional person. And what He did cannot but raise the question of who He was.

Moreover, the question of who Jesus was very easily resolves itself into the other, what was His relation to God? And since that relationship always expresses itself in terms of His divine sonship, we shall, in investigating it, be involved once more in the discussion of that sonship, — but this time from a higher point of view than before.

In this higher aspect of the divine sonship of Jesus there are two lines of inquiry. In the first place, what are the considerations that force the conclusion, and what are the grounds upon which the conclusion rests? And in the second place, what is the conclusion itself or the elements of truth that enter into it? With regard to the first it is necessary to remember this important fact of human knowledge, that the most essential conclusions of the human mind are much wiser and stronger than the arguments by which they are supported. Such persistent beliefs as that in God, or in freedom or immortality, are not believed because they have been or can be proved; they are forever seeking to be proved because they are believed. The proofs may be worthless and are always changing, but the beliefs persist. The necessity for believing in a higher

nature or a higher personality in Jesus Christ is a much deeper and a much truer one than is or can be drawn from particular statements to that effect either on the part of our Lord Himself or of His biographers or interpreters. The fact is that Jesus *was* first more than man to His disciples, and they then sustained that faith by corroborative facts and statements. And so I would rest my statement of the higher being of our Lord not upon proof texts or passages, nor upon old arguments drawn from these, but upon the general fact of the whole manifestation of Jesus Christ, and of the whole impression left by Him upon the world. Leaving aside all question of physical miracles, and even of the physically miraculous in the central and essential fact of the resurrection, and limiting ourselves to the spiritual phenomenon of what He was as man in His accomplished holiness and His perfected life, of what He is in the faith and the life of all who truly know Him, I say that as a matter of fact, Jesus Christ *is* more and greater than any individual son of man, or than any such could or can by any special privilege or opportunity become. Jesus Christ is one of those essential truths that are too great to be proved, like God or freedom or immortality. Such truths are their own best if not only proofs. Let a man, or a time, or the world, or the church, prove them in life and experience and they shall know them; but apart from actual and adequate life and experience they can never be logically or speculatively demonstrated. Let the world, or let the Church again as at the beginning, take in the full impression of the fulness of the truth that was manifested in Jesus Christ; let it

see all humanity and all deity concerned in His person in the question and decision of human life and destiny; let it know Him now in the universality and the effectuality of His personal relation to every human soul in time or space, — and it will feel for itself the considerations that force it to the conclusion of a higher being in our Lord, and the grounds upon which it has not been able to resist the necessity of constructing for itself some theory of such a higher being. The conviction of such a higher being operative and determinative in the phenomenon of the higher humanity of Jesus in no way militates against the reality and integrity of that humanity. The thing to be explained in Jesus is not something beside or outside of His true humanity, but the perfection of the power of that humanity to realize or fulfil itself; and not only to fulfil itself, but to be the principle and power of all other humanity to fulfil itself.

As to the form which we must give to our conviction of the higher being of our Lord, or the separate elements of truth which we must include in our faith in it, I may suggest several successive steps which we must take, and upon one or other of which we are liable to stop, in our progress to the complete truth. In the first place, the higher reach and manifestation of humanity in the person of Jesus might be due to exceptional and perfect relations into which God elected to enter with that particular man, in whom God would demonstrate to all the perfection of the accomplished relation into which all are predestinated to enter with Him. No one can doubt the large amount of truth

already expressed in that view. The question is whether we can stop there, or whether the phenomenon to be explained is exhausted by that interpretation of it. We shall have to give that matter our fuller attention in another chapter.

In the second place, we may attribute to our Lord a higher than natural origin in human history, and consequently a higher than human nature or than ordinary human life in it, and yet not hold the fact or the necessity of any personal pre-existence on His part. He may have personally originated or come into being at His human birth, as we do, and yet not by ordinary human but by exceptional and supernatural divine generation. In that case He would have been never a divine person alone and never a human person alone, but only and from the moment of His birth a divine-human person, a person whose conception or motherhood was of humanity but whose generation or fatherhood was of God.

Or, in the third place, we may think out these partial explanations to the discovery of their inconclusiveness, and so come with the Church to recognize in our Lord a fuller truth of the personal incarnation of God than is contained in any half-way theory of it.

XVII

THE MYSTERY OF THE BIRTH

If we should arrange the subject-matter of the Gospels in the order, not so much of the inherent relative importance of the different parts or topics, as of their actual influence in the production of these records, it would probably run as follows: (1) The death and resurrection. Without these, it is a great question how much of either Gospels or Gospel there would have been at all. There is no doubt that these are the content that mainly determined both, as they are. (2) The report of the public ministry. However incomplete and undecisive this would have been without the death and resurrection, these too would be meaningless except as the natural sequence and logical consequence of the life, the teaching and acts, that had gone before. (3) The baptism and its attendant circumstances. The manifest though somewhat implicit purpose of this part of the story is to account for and explain the spiritual endowment with which Jesus entered upon and discharged His ministry, the divine authority and power that manifestly attended His words and acts. (4) Latest of all arose the question of the point which even though first in reality would naturally come last in apprehension or investigation.

While the order of things in themselves is always forward, the order of thought about things is backward, so that our last knowledge is that of adequate or sufficient causes. So Christianity may have rested for a moment upon the spiritual endowment of Jesus, as covered by His baptism or anointing with the Holy Ghost from heaven. But not for long; the explanation was inadequate; it was impossible to see in Jesus only a man approved of God by mighty works and wonders and signs. The deeper question of His person could not but follow after the others and gradually work its way to the front. As the record of the life had found it necessary to find a starting point for the ministry in the acts and facts of the baptism, so it was not long in going back, behind St. Mark for example, to find a yet earlier beginning for itself in the account of the birth. St. John, we shall see, finds it necessary to go yet further back into the origin of things for sufficient antecedent and cause of the Gospel.

It says nothing against the Gospel of the Infancy as a direct naive record of facts, to recognize a more or less conscious or unconscious reason or motive for its introduction. It answered the immediate direct purpose of denying the human paternity of Jesus, and affirming for Him a divine paternity. When we speak, as we shall, of the motive or purpose in this, it is unnecessary to think of an explicit conscious intention on the part of the writers or of the Church. The truth shapes itself instinctively in the mind and expression of men, so that we often do not know why or how we say the things that are truest. There is no

part of the Gospels that has quite the poetic elevation of the Gospel of the Infancy. And yet what, at the last, one is most impressed with is its spiritual truth; if there is not the true instinct of the spirit there, in thought and language, it is nowhere to be found. Now, what instinct of truth was it that in this effective way shaped the faith of the Gospel to the affirmation of not a human but a divine paternity of our Lord? I venture to say, that at any living point or period of Christianity the Christian consciousness concerning Jesus Christ would instinctively and necessarily have come to the practical conclusion embodied in the artless and poetical stories of the birth and infancy of Jesus. The profound speculative question really though invisibly at issue in and decided by them is this: Who and What is Jesus Christ, in His real and essential personality? The answer which this artless, and yet most profoundly artful, so-called nursery myth forestalls and excludes is this, He was no mere natural offspring of Joseph and Mary. Why not? Because the product of every such natural union is an individual human person. Viewing Jesus Christ in that light it is impossible to construe Him otherwise than as a human individual, exceptionally favored by unique relations with God. The question for the Church then, as for the Church now or at any time, is, Can we, in the light of all that Jesus Christ is to the Church and to humanity, His universality, sufficiency, and ubiquity, can we, I say, be fully and finally satisfied to see in Him only one of the sons of men peculiarly favored and most highly endowed? I must confess for one, that however con-

fronted and impressed with the rational and natural difficulties which we are about to meet in the opposite view, it is equally impossible for me not to be a Christian, or to be one under the conception of such a manhood of Jesus as the above. And I believe that in so saying I am expressing the normal Christian instinct and experience of the world. Now let us try to analyze this instinct or conviction.

I shall not, I am sure, after what has gone before, be charged with neglect or diminution of the human side or aspect of the work or the person of our Lord. I believe very thoroughly that the purpose of His being in the world, and the work He accomplished for humanity, is all to be seen only in what He Himself was as man. I believe that humanity in His person realized all itself and attained all its end. But while I believe that there was nothing revealed or manifested to us in Jesus Christ, save the perfection of His humanity, yet I equally believe that in that perfection there was infinitely more than the humanity so perfected. In other words, I see in Jesus not only the supreme act of humanity in God, but the supreme act also of God in humanity. The dilemma to which for a time at the beginning the Church seemed to be shut up, in the seeming impossibility of holding together both sides of so great a truth, was the necessity either of so holding the deity of our Lord as that the humanity amounted to nothing and was quite incapable of playing the important part belonging to it in the work of its redemption and completion, or else of so holding the reality of the humanity as that the act and work

of God in it fell too far short of what was actually accomplished and manifested in Jesus Christ. The need of Christianity is a conception large enough and comprehensive enough to transcend this dilemma by satisfying the demands on both sides.

There are different right ways of looking at a thing. With regard to the account contained in the story of the birth of the relation between the divine and the human in the person of our Lord, we may view the story either as determining the truth of the matter or as determined by the truth of the matter. We may accept it as an authoritative account declaring to us from heaven the respective parts of the divine and the human in the joint act of the appearance of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Or, on the other hand, we may view the act or fact itself as the essential and real thing, and the human account of it as only a more or less adequate expression of the impression produced by it. For reasons controlling us in our present purpose, we are now occupying the second point of view. We are regarding our Lord Himself as God's word or revelation, and the mere record of Him as the human effort (more or less divinely guided and assisted) to convey the effect of His manifestation in fullest accordance with the truth and meaning of it. Viewed in this light, I think we shall find the story of the birth an expression as true as it is beautiful of the permanent and final Christian conception of the origin of Jesus Christ consistent with the truth of His person. To test this aright, we must try to put ourselves in the place of, to embody in ourselves, the universal, ade-

quate, ultimate, judgment of humanity, in its highest experience and understanding of the person and work of Jesus. If we succeed at all in attaining that point of view, I am sure that we shall sympathize with the Gospels in their final form, and with the Church in its very first act, apostolic and post-apostolic, in repudiating any account of our Lord's origin which would represent Him as merely an individual man, or single human person, elected as any other might have been elected to be brought into unique or exceptional personal relations with God. This is precisely what His natural birth of Joseph and Mary would necessarily make Him. On the contrary the instinct and reason and consensus, or common sense based upon experience, of Christianity persists in and insists upon seeing in Jesus a vastly more both intensive and extensive manifestation and operation of God in humanity than is consistent with that low view. Let any man put himself in the mental and spiritual attitude of the Apostles, of St. Paul, St. Peter, or St. John, after the Lord had become known to them no longer in the flesh but in the spirit, by which I mean in His risen and divine humanity, and try to conceive of the Jesus of their actual personal relations with Him as a man, who but for the accident of his special election would have been like one of themselves. It is quite possible — and not only so, but easy and natural to the spiritual Christian consciousness — to see in our Lord a human nature, a human experience, a human life, broader, deeper, higher, completer than any of ours, not less but more human by every feature of difference between it and

our own, subject to every condition, law, or necessity that binds human life in general, and yet to see in that exhibition of manhood not only humanly perfect but humanly perfected before our eyes — a manifestation no less of God Himself present and operative and actual in all that human activity. The question then is, Who, now that we have come to know Him, shall Jesus be to us? The theory of a dual subject, or double personality, in Him is an impossibility, and need not be discussed. Who then shall He be to us — who shall it be with whom we shall have to do, as the subject of all our infinite and infinitely significant personal relations with Him? Shall Jesus, as Jesus, fade away as the mere two thousand year ago medium of God's self-manifestation to us, with no significance to us in his own purely human self but that of a memory and an example? Or shall we persist to the end in seeing in Jesus Christ God Himself personally revealed in the fulfilled and manifested truth of our humanity; in His actualized human holiness, righteousness, life, God our holiness, righteousness, life? What we want in religion is, not to know about God as He may be in Himself, or as He bears witness to Himself in creation; we want to know God Himself in personal relation with ourselves, and that is just precisely what Jesus Christ not only expresses but is to each one of us. The human self in Him was not that of only one of us, but of us all. It was not one man but humanity that He was. We were every one present in Him; as, if we but knew it, He is present in us every one; and operative unto salvation in every one of us who believes and realizes His presence.

It is not in the interest of our Lord's deity that Christianity objects to the notion of His individual humanity. It is rather that, according to that notion, we have no more interest in Jesus, in the individual humanity, human holiness, human life, embodied in Him, than that of a distant and isolated example. Whereas, what Christianity wants, and believes, and is, is expressed in the fact, not at all that God once manifested Himself exceptionally and perfectly in one man, but that God once for all and completely incarnated Himself in humanity as His Son, and in that all-comprehensive act made all men His sons — potentially, that is, upon the condition of their, in faith and fact, so making themselves. Every man, therefore, should go, not merely *back* to Christ, in memory or in history, but to the ever-present Christ, in act and life, as God in humanity, and therefore in himself, the power and reality of his own holiness, righteousness, and eternal life.

Now, independently of any objective authority in the story itself of the birth of Jesus, let us observe how instinctively and delicately true it is to the innermost and uttermost consciousness of Christianity as to the Who or What, the origin or personality, of its founder. It is not to be denied that it was about to involve itself in a difficult if not impossible physical problem; but for all that, it was impossible for Christian faith to commit itself to the idea that Jesus was in such wise son of Joseph and Mary as that He was the individual human person that must have resulted from that fact. Rather

was He son of God and man, of heaven and earth, of deity and humanity, in a vastly more universal union and relation than would be consistent or reconcilable with such a supposition. I am very far from saying that the story of the birth was the outcome of any such reflection and conscious conclusion on the part of Christianity at the start. What I believe is that the truth itself so shaped the mind and the expression of faith as to keep it in harmony with itself. But how does the matter so shape itself? Not in an abstract statement from heaven of the deity and the humanity of our Lord and of the mode of the union in one person. Not in an exact and scientific declaration of the facts or manner of the generation, conception, and birth. Rather, in a highly elevated and poetic series of pictures in which the spiritual and legitimately imaginative powers are raised to the highest point of understanding and appreciation of the transcendent divine fact conveyed; and at the same time the mind is lifted beyond and above the inexplicable obstacle of the physical mystery. When the two inevitable and yet inexplicable seeming miracles of the higher generation and the resurrection of Jesus Christ are objected to, the true answer of Christianity is not an attempted physical explanation or justification of them; it is rather such a conception, realization, and appreciation of the spiritual necessities and realities, not involved in but themselves involving those mysteries, that faith intelligently and persistently elects to hold fast to the divine facts and leave the mysteries in their own time and way to solve themselves. I say again

that I am no advocate of miracles. But I do not believe that the highest acts or events in the earthly history of God or nature or man are, when viewed as they ultimately shall be in the light of their sufficient reasons, or final causes, miracles in any objectionable sense. On the contrary, they shall be known to be the most natural of facts, because they are the real acts, events, and ends for which nature itself exists, the products or results of which it is but the machinery.

We must now remind ourselves that while the story of the birth of our Lord gives us in simple and poetic form the *matrix* for a doctrine of His higher personality, it does not go the whole way in the construction of such a doctrine. For example, in neither St. Matthew's nor St. Luke's account of the birth is there expressed or implied the fact of a personal pre-existence of our Lord. The representations go no further than that the child born was of divine and not human paternity, and in consequence was to be called son of God. If the matter were to go no further than this, the implication would be that He who originated in that act of divine generation and human conception and birth was a divine-human being, whose existence dated from that moment. God, by an inexplicable act in humanity, produced in Jesus Christ one who, as he was son of no individual man, so was himself no particular or individual son of man. He was not the son of a man, but the Son of man; and so He was not a man but man, all men and every man, the common humanity in which all are one and of which He is the essence and the unity. This would satisfy the Christian consciousness up to a

certain point, but not wholly so and therefore not permanently so, as we shall soon see. It gives freer scope to the necessary conception of the universality of our Lord's humanity and personality. It makes Him more adequately and comprehensively Immanuel, God with us, and God in us. It better explains at once the perfect humanity and humanness of our Lord and the mystery of the perfection in the humanness or humanity. It furnishes a more sufficient basis for the essential truth of Christianity expressed in the phrases, God our holiness, God our righteousness, God our life. But if we go so far, we must of necessity go further, and even so much of the truth as is won by so much advance finds confirmation and is made secure only by the fuller truth of a yet further progress.

XVIII

IDEAL PRE-EXISTENCE

When our Lord said of Himself, as reported by St. John, Before Abraham was, I am, it is not impossible that He referred to an ideal pre-existence in the mind of God. He may have meant that the truth embodied in Him, the purport and purpose of His personal presence and His lifework upon earth, was something always in the mind of God, something which the faith of Abraham had foreseen and rejoiced in. At any rate, we shall not for the present go beyond the abundant matter for reflection contained in even this understanding of the words. If we trust ourselves to the mind of the Gospels, the New Testament, and primitive Christianity, we are not as yet making too much, but rather too little, of the truth as it is in Jesus. The eternal significance of that truth, in its relation to God, the whole creation, and more immediately to humanity, fills all minds and finds expression in a variety of independent forms. In our own endeavours — endeavours that should not and shall not cease while the world lasts — to find new interpretation and new illumination of the divine meaning of our Lord, we find ourselves inevitably moving along the lines of primitive thought and life, for the simple reason that

those are the only lines on which the matter itself persists in thinking and living itself out. In view, then, of the impossibility of doing otherwise, I shall adduce and comment upon several of the New Testament statements of the eternal significance of the truth of Jesus Christ. When I speak of the eternal significance, I mean eternal both *a parte ante* and *a parte post.* So significant is the truth of Jesus that in God Himself it dominates both the eternity of the past and the eternity of the future. It occupies the divine foreknowledge and determines the divine predestination.

We will first consider the meaning of our Lord in His relation to humanity. In Him God is described as having foreknown and predestined or foreordained every man and humanity itself. The purpose and destiny of man from eternity is revealed in Him as being that of sons of God. We were foreordained unto a sonship to God not yet realized in man, but realized in anticipation in that man in whom God has revealed us to ourselves and given us already in faith the inheritance, or destiny of sons, which awaits us in fact. And not only did God in His eternal foreknowledge and purpose foreordain or predestine us to be conformed to the image of His Son, as the firstborn among many brethren, or the first to realize and manifest the divine destiny of all, but in that Son Himself He preordained as also He in time accomplished the whole course and process of human redemption and completion. Every incident or event in the human experience of His Son befell Him by the determinate foreknowledge and counsel of the Father, who before

the æons had determined in His wisdom not only man's destiny but the mode and method of it. The way of salvation is expressed in the words, It behoved Him, by whom and for whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings, — supplemented and completed by these other words, And having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the author, or cause, of eternal salvation.

It will be interesting to follow out the above truth as it is briefly suggested by another writer of the New Testament. God, we are told, having in various measures and manners spoken to the world through prophets, spoke to us at last *in a son*. That is to say, in one who bore to Himself the very real and profound relation of son. The form of expression as well as all the succeeding context means to emphasize to the utmost the truth of sonship as being the *res* or matter of God's self-revelation to us in Jesus Christ. God's purpose was to lead many sons, humanity — personally, and therefore one by one — to glory through self-attained sonship to Himself. This was to be accomplished through one Himself perfected for ever as son through the things He had suffered in a perfect human experience, and so fitted to impart the truth and grace of perfect sonship to those who could themselves attain it only through such sufferings. Now the point to observe is the manner in which the writer speaks of the double eternity of the truth of that sonship of Jesus, and of humanity in Jesus. God has spoken to us in a Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made

the worlds. Dropping for the present all question of an eternal pre-human personality ascribed here to our Lord, and interpreting the words only as meaning that there was accomplished and manifested in Jesus Christ a human sonship for which and through which the whole creation of God from eternal beginning to eternal end was brought into being or existed at all — and surely it cannot mean anything less than this — let us reflect for a moment upon the stupendous importance attached by it to the divine-human truth of Jesus Christ. We will throw our appreciation of it into the following statement: The sonship realized and revealed to us in Jesus Christ is at once the final and the first cause of all things, of the whole creation. The universe comes to its majority and enters upon its inheritance in His person. If this seems an exaggerated and preposterous statement, it is nevertheless just what is consistently and persistently maintained in the New Testament as a whole. And not only is it in many places, as we shall see, actually so stated, but the statement itself is in perfect harmony and keeping with the whole mind and truth of the sacred record and the faith of Christianity then and since. The argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews would need a much more detailed exposition to bring out the full force of its bearing upon the matter in hand, and I hope to give it in a separate treatment. Stated now very briefly, the object is to portray the destiny of man as it has been realized in anticipation in the person of Jesus Christ, through His perfect sufferings and sacrifice and His thereby perfected sonship. Jesus Christ is thus revealed as the

meaning and purpose of humanity from the beginning, and its divine accomplishment or fulfilment in the end. But the meaning and end of humanity is the meaning and end of creation, and so the truth as it is in Jesus acquires not only a universal human significance, but an eternal cosmical significance.

It may be too much to say that Christianity anticipates the modern teaching of evolution, but that teaching certainly wonderfully adapts itself to the expression of Christianity. The argument we are tracing assumes that creation has been by *æons*, ages or stages, in which each lower has been the preparation for the next higher. As from the beginning, matter has existed for spirit, and necessity for freedom, so in the later stages the æon of law has prepared the way for and is now ready to give way to that of faith. The appeal of the one is to the natural powers and accountability of man, which needed to be first developed and could be so only under the demands and sanctions of objective law. The other, through the experienced insufficiency of nature and impotency of the human will in itself, appeals to a higher and later development of the nature of man, whose end and function is to fulfil and be fulfilled by — not self but God, or self only in God. Thus what we can never be of ourselves through law we shall be of God through faith. The successive æons do not contradict but prepare for and fulfil each other, and He who is the end of the last is the end of all. So Jesus Christ who is the end of faith is the end also of law; the end of spiritual manhood was the predestined end also of natural manhood, and still more generally

the ends of spirit were those of matter. So the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews could see in Jesus Christ not only the end of humanity but the heir of all things. And because He was final cause of all creation, that for which the universe exists, therefore was He also first cause and efficient cause. Because in all rational production it is the end which determines and sets in motion the beginning; it is the end which comprehends and orders all the means, and in which the whole process consists or holds together in the correlation of the parts and the unity and consistency of the whole. So Jesus Christ is the perfect expression of God so far as God has expressed Himself at all, the raying forth of His otherwise invisible glory, the outward impress of His secret substance.

The identical truth, in all its length and breadth and depth, is quite independently expressed in the Epistles to the Colossians. There too Jesus Christ has not only a universal human but an eternal cosmical significance. In Him we have our redemption, the remission or putting away of our sins; He has reconciled us in the body of His flesh through death, to present us holy unto God. That is to say, in Him we have died to sin and now live to God. But that is only the last stage of what He eternally was and is and shall be to us. He was the entire divine foreknowledge and purpose and shall be the entire divine completion and fulfilment. His relation to the Church was His relation to humanity, and His relation to humanity was His relation to creation, and His relation to creation was His absolute and universal relation to God. He

is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in Him were all things created. . . . All things were created through Him (as efficient cause), and unto Him (as final cause); and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. Language like this flows easily and naturally out of, and is in the most perfect consistency and harmony with, the entire New Testament conception of Jesus Christ. His own personal attitude and claims are explained and justified by it, and would be by nothing lower or less. We can see in the light of it, and no otherwise, why in His name repentance and remission, redemption and salvation, should be preached to all the world, and into His name all mankind should be baptized for the eternal life which He is and which He gives.

This is not yet the whole height of it, and yet I would affirm that no one who rises to this height of the conception of Jesus Christ can for an instant tolerate the idea that His humanity was but that of an individual human person in whom God exceptionally revealed His presence and power. The Lord of glory was not an individual man in God; He was all humanity in God, because He was God Himself in humanity. The humanity in which God was manifest in the flesh was our common, our universal humanity. In it He was no less man than we; in it He knew no other laws or conditions than ours; in it He wrought out the only possible redemption or completion for us; in it He manifested a holiness, righteousness, life, which because they were human and humanly attained may be ours also; in Him, because He was what we are and

where we are, we too shall be where and what He is. But to us He is in His humanity Himself and not another. Not another *in whom* He is, but evermore the One *Who* He is. Therefore, in corroboration of the conclusion reached in the previous chapter, from the larger and higher standpoint which we have reached, we reiterate the impossibility of seeing in Jesus the son of Joseph and Mary, because in that case He could not but have been the individual human person whom from the higher approach it is impossible for us to think Him.

It may now be asked, and unquestionably will be asked, how we shall go about conceiving the derivation from Mary of a human nature apart from a distinct human subject or personality. For my part, I might say that I do not go about it at all. What I am concerned about is simply the matter of our Lord's person or personality, without any responsibility or competency for the question of how it came about. The Gospels do give us a most highly and beautifully poetical account of that, and the account assists me to imagine or picture to myself what I can in no wise explain or understand. I do not at all believe the one divine-human personality of our Lord upon the authoritative statement of the story of His birth. Knowing Jesus Himself as He is known and revealed to us in the New Testament and in the mind and experience of the Church, I unhesitatingly recognize in Him — and the more, the more I know Him — no single man filled with God, but the fulness of the Godhead present and operative in all humanity. The humanity in Him is

mine and every man's; the divinity in Him is God potentially present in every man for salvation, and efficiently present and saving in every man who believes. We are primarily and essentially interested in the spiritual truth given us in Jesus Christ. We are only secondarily and speculatively interested in the physical or metaphysical or scientific explanation of *how* those spiritual truths or facts have come about. As I said in connection with the resurrection, all that may be said to belong to the machinery of the Gospel; it is not the Gospel itself.

What is the Gospel itself, in recapitulation of the conclusions so far reached by us, may be expressed in an expansion of St. Paul's definition of the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. God may have been in Christ in different degrees of identity with Him, and we do not take the words as defining or determining the degree, further than that the world of humanity — and apparently, from other passages, the world outside of humanity — was in Christ brought into spiritual and moral harmony with God. The degree and manner of God's being in Christ we deduce not so much from any particular statement or statements at all as from the entire phenomenon of the Christ Himself whose *ergon* or actual operation in the world was to be His most exact definition and His most perfect credential. Judging our Lord, then, in the totality of His manifestation and operation in the Gospel, we come first with Christianity to the conclusion that we have here to do with a work wrought in no particular indi-

vidual of our race but in the common or universal humanity of the whole race. So convinced is Christianity from the beginning that its relation to Christ is not that to an individual man, who could by no means be to it more than an historic example and an objective and remote influence — for how can any particular man that ever lived be the universal presence and the potential self that Jesus Christ may be to every man! — that there ensues to it the necessity of some mode in which there may be, and is, the actual presence and operation of God in a humanity which is not that of any one man but which every man may know to be his own, and in which everything done in Christ every man may know to be done in himself. This universality of the humanity of our Lord may be vague and indefinable, and it may very inadequately express the actual truth as it is in Jesus; but the vagueness is in our conception and expression. The universality and potentiality of the relation of Jesus Christ to humanity as a whole and to every individual member of it, however inadequately explained or expressed by us, remains a fact and transcends in infinite extent and degree the possible effect of any relation to any individual son of man. The fact, then, of such a universal humanity is the truth of religion. How it shall come about is a physical or metaphysical problem of tremendous interest to speculative curiosity, but not an essential part of religious faith. If there should be such a general manifestation of God in our humanity as we are at present desiderating and claiming, how should we *a priori* expect the physical mode of it to appear to us? For

my part, I should not expect a scientific demonstration of the natural process. I should look for just such spiritual evidence to faith that the thing has taken place, and just such undefined and poetic expression to sense, as we actually possess in the Gospels and in the actual and permanent work of the Gospel. I take, then, the whole story of the Gospel of the birth and infancy of our Lord as simply so much as God pleased to reveal to sense and imagination of the physical side of an act on His part in humanity, the interest and concern to us in which is chiefly on the spiritual side. We want to know God in Christ in all the extent and fulness and effect of His being there; it is not necessary, and it would not be profitable, to us to know physiologically how He came or became there. I accept the account of the birth without knowing at all *how* it is true.

Just as we stand to the problem of the virgin-birth, so vexing to those who would have a scientific explanation of Jesus Christ as an historical physical phenomenon in the world, so we stand, as has been partially stated before, to the problem of the resurrection. The two facts on their spiritual side stand intimately related and mutually dependent as follows: While it would be quite possible in itself to represent the earthly career of Jesus, as without flaw or break, an act of humanity — the act in which, from beginning to end, humanity fulfils itself — yet must we equally, if we are to be true to the whole manifestation of the truth, be able to represent it as an act of God wrought in humanity. The subject or person of the divine-human act of that earthly

life is not two but one. Viewed in the human doing of it, He was man, in all the limitation that is proper to man, working out in humanity the redemption and perfection necessary for it in the way possible for it. Viewed in the divine doing of it He was God, emptied or shorn of none of His divine attributes in the process or performance of an act which on God's part was as much the divinest as on man's it was the most human. We must in no way even temporarily lower either side of the divine-human co-operation of God and man in the act of their mutual reconciliation in Jesus Christ. Now the reconciliation effected in Christ was a real reconciliation. It was the bringing of humanity, first in His own person, into not natural but spiritual unity with God, and so imparting to it the, not natural but spiritual, divine nature, the nature of holiness and love. But the divine spirit and nature in us bring with them the divine life. As sin in itself and in all its consequences is death in all its forms, death spiritual, moral, and physical, so holiness as the spirit and nature of God in us is life in all its forms or manifestations, life spiritual, moral, and natural. The act of perfect holiness on the part of our Lord was in itself and in all its consequences the act of perfect life. The first enemy dead, the last enemy dies with it. Because the Devil through all his temptations found nothing in Jesus of sin, therefore he had no hold upon Him in death. The resurrection was a necessary consequence. In the spiritual drama effect follows cause in the most natural process and by the most necessary and yet free sequence in the whole working of the divine evolution.

He who is at home in the spirit and knows God in Christ is so entrenched in the higher truth of the Gospel that he may safely leave to God's time and way the solution of its acknowledged, to us insoluble, lower problems.

XIX

THE GOSPEL IN ST. JOHN

All our interpretation so far of the higher being of our Lord is expressed in terms of Christian thought prior to the writings of St. John; that is, it marks the progress from the point of view of the Synoptic Gospels to that of the last of the Gospels. If, apart from any particular phrases or statements which are always susceptible of diverse understandings, I should undertake to deduce from the whole mind of St. John his conception of the phenomenon presented to the world in the person of Jesus Christ, I should express it as he himself does in the opening words of his first epistle. Jesus Christ is to him always the Word — first, last, and complete — of God. Now, whatever else or more that Word expresses — and all that God has revealed or shall reveal of Himself is expressed in Him — it is manifested to us first as a word of *life*. The Life was manifested, and we have heard and seen and known it by every evidence in which it is possible for human experience to attest itself. What do we mean by The Life? We mean the life lived by God, lived humanly among us by Jesus Christ, lived by us to whom in union and unity with Himself He imparts it. St. John preaches the life that all may share it, and our partici-

pation in it, he declares, is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. As to what the life is, he declares it to be what God is, viz.: *light* — which means pure truth, pure holiness, pure blessedness. The lack or opposite of either of these, ignorance, sin, sorrow, is darkness and death. If we are walking in the light, then we know that we have the life. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin, because we are dead to sin by participation in His death and alive to holiness through experience of the power of His resurrection. But if, professing to be in Christ and the life, we are walking in the darkness of spiritual ignorance and sin and cowardly or hopeless sorrow, we lie, and do not the truth. The mean or condition of this life in us is faith; not faith in general, but a very definite faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The actuality of His accomplished sonship is the concrete expression of the life of God realized in humanity. Faith in and appropriation of that sonship through death and resurrection makes us sons of God and gives us the victory that overcomes the world. As Jesus Christ is the substance of our eternal life, so is He the test of it. The recognition and knowledge of divine sonship in Him, the *seeing* the Father in Him as Son, is the evidence and measure of our capacity to know truth, to love holiness, to will righteousness, to live the life of God. He who believes God in Him has set to his seal that God is true. He who believes not Him has made God a liar, because he believes not Him who is God's word and witness. And the witness, accepted or rejected, is this, That God gave unto us eternal life, and this life

is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.

Let us reflect for a moment upon the corroboration given us here of the conclusion to which we have been already brought. This witness who is the so direct word of God and word of life to us is personally not merely one of ourselves, whom God has charged with a message to us. He in whom God thus speaks is no less one with us, but He is far more one with God, than that. It does not make our Lord less man to make Him very far more God than any one of us can be, or could become by any degree of human intimacy with the Father.

When we pass to the Gospel of St. John, we may properly leave the consideration of the Prologue to the last, as most probably the deduction or induction of the apostle from the matter which makes up the body of the Gospel. Here as in the epistle Jesus Christ is presented to us primarily and immediately as the divine light and life of men. No man hath seen God; Jesus Christ only has declared or revealed Him. He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father. But the invisible divine fatherhood is declared only in the divine sonship realized in humanity and so made visible to men. It is only sonship that reveals or declares fatherhood anywhere, and especially in that revelation of fact, or in the thing, which is God's only method of expressing Himself. Just as the life of God was manifested in our Lord not by any mere declaration of it, but by the same life lived actually upon earth and exhibited to human experience and investigation, so the fatherhood

of God is revealed not by anything which our Lord has to tell us about it, but in the concrete and visible reality of His sonship perfected before our eyes. The fact in itself that the necessary effect of our Lord's being in the world is, first, the imparting of life, and, second, the execution of judgment, is profoundly recognized by St. John. God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world, but to save the world. But just because life accepted is salvation, life rejected is damnation. Judgment executes itself or is self-inflicted. If Jesus Christ *is* the word of God, and is light and life, then he who believes not Him is *ipso facto* judged; he forfeits all that is involved in being son of God, because he has not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. He refuses to exercise the faith that saves, or to accept through it the thing which is salvation. The consequence of that is not God's but his own act.

Jesus Christ Himself, all through St. John's Gospel, proclaims Himself the resurrection, the regeneration, the eternal life of humanity. He is the water of life and the bread from heaven. He quenches all thirst and satisfies all hunger. In the most impressive and elaborate way He insists upon the necessity of our making His life our life, of taking Him into ourselves by such an act of spiritual reception and assimilation as that He as the proper food of our souls shall be converted into us and we into Him. Such language may be taken too literally, if we mean by that too materially. The language of matter is transferred to the things of spirit, and is then to be interpreted in the sphere of

spirit and not of matter. This, I suppose, is what our Lord means in the words, It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life. But although spiritual acts and processes are expressed in material terms, they are not less actual or real. The act of eating and drinking Christ, though it be not with the mouth nor with the organs of physical digestion, assimilation, and conversion, is just as much an act and just as necessary an act. And moreover, when it is sacramentally associated or united with it, the spiritual act as certainly and definitely takes place as the physical; we eat and drink Christ as really and as effectually to the life of our souls as we do the bread and wine to the nourishment of our bodies.

The profound truth that the essential claim of Jesus Christ upon men, and the only ultimate evidence of that claim, is to be found in the matter of fact of what He *is* to them and they to Him, is in several ways most beautifully and touchingly brought out in the Gospel of St. John. Things made for each other and incomplete without each other will naturally seek each other and come together, unless abnormal conditions and hindrances stand in the way. Spiritual healing, the cure of souls, human salvation, is as much a matter of assisting nature, of merely removing obstacles in the way of the divine processes, as physical healing is more and more recognizing itself to be. Spiritual things are so truly *for* spiritual men, that they cannot but be *true* for spiritual men, if they are truly brought together. God for the soul and the soul for God ought to carry its own

truth and its own proof, and will if it be not prevented. To remove that prevention and allow the highest act in nature to take place, was the work of Jesus Christ — to take away sin and bring God and man together. The type in nature of all complementary being and the consequent act or fact of affinity and union is the principle of sex, and that is made use of all through the Scriptures in illustration of the relation between God and humanity. The relation as it ought to be, the relation as it is marred and ruined by sin, humanity as in adultery with impure loves and false gods, the divine patience and forgiveness and grace that would woo us back into the true love and the true union out of which alone are the issues of life and blessedness — is not this all the burden of the Word of God! John the Baptist realized the task to be accomplished, and felt the insufficiency for it of any mere man or any only humanly administered ordinance. He that should unite God and man must come from above, and the grace of the sacrament of union must be of heaven. He was not the bridegroom, but only the friend of the bridegroom, whose humbler function was only such human preparation as could be made for His coming. The gist of the whole matter is expressed in the words, He that hath the bride is the bridegroom. It is not that he who is the bridegroom hath the bride, — true as that is also, — but the converse. The claim of the bridegroom to the bride rests in the fact that in her truest and deepest self, in her divine nature and destinature, she belongs to Him. When He seeks her He seeks His own, and when she accepts Him she accepts

one who is, in the eternal foreknowledge of the past and in the eternal predestination of the future, her own. The meaning of all affinities, the truth of all unions, the reality of all completion of one thing in another, is revealed and realized in the act in which God and man, God and creation, are made one in Jesus Christ.

The same general truth is brought out by our Lord under another figure. He is the true and good shepherd whose own the sheep are. He knows them and they know Him, because they are His, and, in the deepest natural sense in all the universe of God, in the root and nature of things, He is theirs. As deep as that, in the very reality of all right or possession, we are God's and God is ours! As mutual knowledge is the fruit and result of mutual natural right and possession, so mutual love is the perfect expression of it. Because they are His and He is theirs, therefore He gives His life for them and gives His life to them: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.

Jesus Christ is the door; not only the door to the sheep, the true right of entrance and the entrance of the true right thing into the minds and hearts and lives of men, — but also the door to God: By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture. I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly. As He is the door, so is He the way: No man cometh to the Father but by me. As to what that way is, He has left us in no doubt: Whither I go, He says, ye know the way. It is not the way of nature; nature is part of the way, but it brings

no man all the way to God. It is not the way of human wisdom or will; it is only through our own wisdom and will indeed that we can come to God, but these of themselves will never bring us there. It is the way of humility and need and dependence and prayer; the way of all-enduring patience, all-surviving hope, all-overcoming and conquering faith, all-sacrificing and all-fulfilling love; it is the way of the water of baptism, and the blood of the cross, and the testimony of the spirit. He has opened for us into the holiest place, which is God Himself, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, and by His blood. It is the way by which, through the eternal Spirit, He offered up Himself without spot to God.

The raising of Lazarus, which was the immediate occasion or cause of our Lord's death, whatever it was as a miracle, was a mighty parable of the central truth of Jesus Christ Himself. It enabled Him to claim for Himself that He is the resurrection and the life. It prefigured, before His own real resurrection, the fact that when lifted up He should draw all men unto Him, as being in Himself and for all the victory over the world, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. The *exousia* claimed by our Lord and conceded to Him in all the Gospels is carried to its highest expression in St. John. It is not only all authority and power over the flesh, in the divine might of the spirit, but it is power and authority over all flesh. What He is in Himself He is for all, with power to be in all.

This last mentioned truth, of all in Christ and Christ in all, brings us to another which is developed to its

fullest expression in St. John. We must remember that in this Gospel, even if possible more explicitly than in all the others, Jesus at His baptism was revealed to John the Baptist as He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. That Spirit was His own without measure, not only to have but to impart. Of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace. Through that eternal Spirit He offered up Himself without spot to God, and the selfsame Spirit in us is the inspiration and the power of all love and service and sacrifice. The Spirit was the distinctive promise of God in the Gospel. The Apostles were bidden by our Lord upon His ascension to await in Jerusalem the promise of the Father, which, said He, ye heard from me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. And the acts of the Apostles and the life and activity of the Church begin with that baptism as a birth indeed from above. This is the account of St. Luke, but it is in the most exact accord with St. John, who thus describes the most significant act of our Lord after His resurrection: Jesus appeared in the midst of His disciples, and said unto them, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained. The truths expressed in this brief commission and mission are as follows: First, as God was in Christ, the Father in the Son, so in equal reality and with equal efficacy was Christ to be in His disciples

or in His Church. Their commission and mission was to be the continuance and permanent exercise and activity upon earth of the authority and power which was His own in heaven and upon earth. As He had always claimed that His work was not His own, but the Father's, so was their work to be not theirs but His. But His in them, as the Father in Him; as He had manifested the Father in what He Himself was, so were they to manifest Him not alone in any official or external authority, but in the reality and power of Himself in them. In the second place, the commission recognizes the fact that the work of the Church is to be precisely that of Christ Himself, that of reconciliation with God through remission of sin. The sacramental act as well as the general ministry of reconciliation and remission was to be so executed in His name, by His authority, and with His power, that it should be as though God Himself did it by them. And the specific gift, as of God through Him so of Him through them to the world, was the baptism of repentance unto the death of sin, and faith unto the life of God and of holiness.

But in the third place, and what was the more explicit contribution of St. John to the account of the ministry of our Lord Himself, and that committed by Him to His Church, is the more formal endowment with the Spirit, as the power of its exercise and the express object of its communication. And here, in culmination and conclusion of this brief résumé of the Gospel as seen by St. John, we must dwell a little more deeply upon the necessary nature of any Gospel to men as being one, equally and coördinately, of Word and of

Spirit. The coming to us of a gospel with power is conditioned not only upon the fact of the objective communication, but upon that of a corresponding subjective response. The need of the latter as well as the former, as coequal and coördinate part of the gift or grace of God, is not only expressed implicitly in the necessity of a baptism with the Spirit, but is stated explicitly in the assurance that the gift in Christ includes the repentance prerequisite on our part as well as the remission consequent on God's part. But let us look at the matter itself as it actually and historically happened, and so interpreted itself in fact. No one can pass from the general attitude of the first disciples toward their Lord prior to what was said to have happened on the Day of Pentecost, and the attitude of those same disciples toward Him after that event, without feeling the great difference. Without at all commenting upon the facts or the meaning of that eventful day, it is perfectly clear that it stands in the story of Christianity for something scarcely less decisive than Easter Day itself. If the objective fact of Christianity culminated on Easter, Pentecost was marked by a subjective revolution in relation and in response to that fact that was quite its complement and most effectually its completion. It is impossible to treat as artistic literary fiction the picture of the powerful but vague and indefinite emotions and impressions of the disciples up to the Day of Pentecost, and after that the surprising change to a clear understanding and a definite plan and purpose as to the meaning and the preaching of Christ and the resurrection. Something

had evidently happened which prepared the spiritual men to whom they were revealed for the spiritual things that were revealed to them. I have always thought that we find a pre-intimation of what was more perfectly to take place, and on a larger scale, in the saying of our Lord to Peter, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven. And also that saying of St. Paul, When it was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in me. . . . It is always possible in spiritual things to distinguish between the objective manifestation to us and the subjective revelation in us. We may for a long time know spiritual facts without us, and then suddenly come to an interior knowledge of them so different from and transcending the other that it seems to be a difference in kind as well as in degree. In spiritual things we say that it is the difference between knowing about them and knowing them. Our Lord Himself distinguishes the light that is within us, the light of our own power of vision, from the light without us, the light that comes from the things we see. It is this interior light, the vision of the spiritual man for the spiritual thing, that is the function of the Spirit. It is of this that our Lord says, Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God. And so the most devoted and sincere knowledge and love of Jesus before Pentecost was but a knowing Him in the flesh. After that, there was the most real and profound knowing Him in the spirit. And so to know Him was, according to St. Paul, a new creation; it was to be a new man, dead with Him to sin and alive with Him to God.

Our Lord, according to St. John, taught that His own function as the Word was to be not superseded, but succeeded and completed by that of the Spirit. The Spirit coming after Him was not to supply His absence but to effect His presence. The new mode of His presence, not without but within, not in the flesh but in the spirit, was to be a much more real and effectual presence. The disciples ought to rejoice rather than grieve at His taking away, because the sorrow of His going would for them be swallowed up in the joy of His return. The Spirit which should come, not in stead but in fulfilment of Him, would be the Spirit of truth, because it would bring them to the knowledge of Him who is the Word of truth: The Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you. He shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine and declare it unto you. As it is the part and function of the Word to reveal to us from without the whole truth of God and ourselves, so is it the part of the Spirit to reveal to us from within, to open our eyes to see, the meaning and truth of the divine Word. The Word, as I have frequently said, is the principle and medium of objective revelation. The Spirit is that of subjective apprehension, comprehension, and appropriation. Deep answereth unto deep. The deep of God without us and above us is inaudible save as it is answered by the deep of God within us. There is no gospel or salvation for us which does not come by the Word through the Spirit.

In a way, we may say that that means, by God through ourselves; but, in a more true way, it means that while our salvation must be of ourselves as well as of God, we owe the *ourselves* in the matter, as well as the divine part in it, to God, who there as everywhere is All in all.

XX

THE LOGOS

The Prologue of the Gospel according to St. John needs a treatment to itself, because it is the final deduction from all the matter of all the Gospels, as indeed from the whole Christian impression of the whole phenomenon of Jesus Christ. That Jesus Christ was a divine manifestation, revelation, or expression — of which there could be no doubt — could not but lead to the question, Of what is He the expression? That question once raised could not be laid at rest until the whole answer had been elicited. (1) He is the *logos* or divine expression of humanity; that is the most immediate and self-evident answer. He recapitulates in Himself not only the whole nature but the whole life and destiny of man, *longam expositionem hominis.* (2) He is the *logos* of creation, the revelation and anticipation of the end or final cause of all things. Consciously or unconsciously, by reason or by instinct, the New Testament anticipates in the most remarkable degree that sense of unity which is the first principle of modern science. The unity of the natural and the spiritual, that matter exists for mind, necessity for freedom, the earth for man, and finally man for Christ as Christ for God — that is all from beginning to end a

drama of evolution as scientific as it is rational and religious. The knowledge of that fragment of evolution which falls within the experience of our senses, and to which we limit the term and meaning of nature, is manifestly not a complete or whole science, because it is out of the reach of it to correlate what nevertheless must be held together and must be relatable and related, — as, for example, necessity and freedom, or organism and personality. At any rate, Christianity from the beginning seemed to see how the natural creation terminated in man, as man through spiritual creation is to terminate in Christ. The Adam of St. Paul is only humanity as end of the old, as Christ is humanity as beginning and end of the new, the spiritual which as higher natural was predestined from the beginning to supplement and complete the natural. And (3) Jesus Christ is the *logos* of God, so far as God is in any way whatsoever revealed or expressed at all.

Whatever be the historical source and origin of the logos-language of St. John, I think enough has been said to show that the truth which finds in it its final expression is one legitimately developed within the New Testament itself. Christianity has its own theology, cosmology, and anthropology, and the unity of all these is the truth expressed in its Christology. We state that truth when we say that Jesus Christ is the *logos* at once of God, of the Cosmos, and of Man. God, outside of Himself, is revealed only in the "all things" which we call His creation. The creation, so far as there is any end or meaning in it, is interpreted only in man. The final cause or reason for being of man finds no ade-

quate expression but in Jesus Christ. Let God, the cosmos, man, and Christ, be fully understood in the light and in terms of one another, and we have that complete science which will alone explain all, because nothing less will include all. Let us look rapidly over this summary or summation of all truth in Jesus Christ as *logos* of all.

The propriety of the term Logos manifests itself first in the fact that it makes the principle or beginning of things to be, primarily, what we call intelligence or reason. I say primarily, because the first principle cannot be intelligence only. Bare intelligence does not move to action, has not in itself as such the impulse to originate. As we must ascribe to the *primum mobile* the idea of things, so must we include in it the feeling for things which is the condition of will and activity. The universe had its beginning, not only in wisdom, but in love. But the Prologue before us begins by affirming in the very choice of its key word the rationality of the universe. Things are the utterance of thought, and have no existence outside of thought — no matter how substantial their reality within it.

In the second place, the propriety of the word Logos consists in the manner in which it distinguishes the principle of the universe from God, while at the same time identifying it with Him. The Logos is the ideal or formal principle of things. It is that which expresses itself in them. But in things as we know them, while in thought we may distinguish between the formal and the material principles, they are in fact one and indistinguishable. In the same way, when we think of God

as immanent in the universe, or as the ideal or formal principle of things, we are apt to make Him so one with them and part of them as to be indistinguishable from them. This pantheistic tendency is corrected or prevented in Christianity in its very inception by recognizing God as immanent indeed in nature or in the evolution of things, but recognizing Him in them not substantially but rationally, as one with them not in substance or being but in reason or meaning. So we say that the universe is the expression not of God and yet of God; not of God because not of God's substance or self, and yet of God because of God's Logos, or His thought and will and activity. The Logos so understood is both identified with and distinguished from God. There is room for full immanence without sacrifice of the truth of transcendence.

The Logos of our prologue justifies itself in this further respect that, whereas in the speculation of the world there had been more or less of dualism, this summarily and effectually excludes it. Dualism sees in the matter of the universe something independent of its form. Mind does not create or originate matter, but only shapes or forms, or informs, a matter existent independently of itself. Even Leibnitz could claim for the world only that it was the best possible out of the material available, a material independent apparently of God Himself. The Logos of Christianity is not only the formal or informing principle within things, but the things themselves exist only within it and are but the terms or symbols of its self-expression. All things come into or possess their being only through the Logos,

and nothing enters into existence or exists outside or apart from it. There could be no possible stronger or plainer expression of what is true in the idealistic as contradistinguished from the materialistic origin and constitution of the universe.

From mere being or existence the prologue passes at once to the consideration of life; and then as instantaneously to that which alone is life indeed, to self-conscious, rational, human life. In the Logos is life, and the life is the light of men. In these words we have the subject-matter of the whole thought of St. John, or rather the self-representation of Jesus as reported by St. John. Life is the end, or the highest and final expression, of being; and all being is but the material or matter of life. But by life is meant not the lower forms or stages of it, but only what it was destined to become, and what it actually becomes when it fulfils its idea. Thus vegetable or animal life, or even human life in the womb or in infancy or in the undeveloped savage state, is not yet life in the most real and essential meaning of it. The essence of life as taught and manifested by our Lord is to know and determine itself. Life is not truly life in the supreme sense until it is such an object to itself as will fully occupy and exercise those powers of intelligence, affection, will, and freedom in which selfhood consists. Any life which does not so know itself as to find in the task of its own self-fulfilment the activity of the rational, moral, and spiritual powers that make up personality, is not yet life in the sense of Jesus Christ. The condition of life, then, is that it shall know itself; the end or fulfilment of

life is self-realization through self-knowledge. God gives us in Christ to have life in ourselves; that is, so to know ourselves as the object of our self-determination, and to determine ourselves in accordance with our self-knowledge, as that our lives shall be our own.

The life is the light of men. We may place the emphasis first upon men; it is the *differentia* of man to know life, to enter into its meaning, to perceive its truth, to appreciate its beauty, or nobility, to be doer as well as enjoyer of its good. To know life is the condition of true living it. But the emphasis is stronger upon life. The true light of men, the proper object of human thought and knowledge, life itself, — what it means and what it is to live. Life is not made for labour, but labour for life; life is not made for science, but science for life; life is not made for service, but service for life; life is not made for sacrifice, but sacrifice for life. All things, even the highest, are but means to the one end of life. Even the highest act of not receiving but giving life is itself but the highest means of life. We can have no higher end than life, and when we seek to make it yet higher by prefixing "not our own," only the more for not being our own is it also our own. The more it is not our own as end in the sense of motive, the more will it be our own as end in the sense of result. But we may place the emphasis in our sentence not upon life, but upon the definite article which invariably accompanies it not only in St. John himself but in his report of our Lord. It is not merely life but The Life that is the light of men. Life is not any thing, or many things, but one thing. There is one spirit,

one law, one manifestation or expression, one realization, and one reality of it. In whatever form *that* is realized or expressed, it is the divine *logos;* because it is the thing expressed, and not merely the expression of the thing, that makes it the word of God. Jesus Christ is supremely The Logos, because He alone is the supreme divine word or expression of the One Life. But even prior to the historical manifestation of the life in Christ, the life was *to be* manifested to man and to be apprehended by him. To live the life by knowing it and know it by living it was from the beginning his *differentia* as man. The Logos in the sense of God's truth or reality of life was eternal, and was always *to be* manifested as the light and the life of men, as that which they were to live through knowing, and know in order to live.

That the light, which was the divine truth or knowledge of life, for so long and to such an extent shone in the darkness of the world, and the darkness apprehended it not, proves neither that it was not there to be apprehended nor that the apprehension of it was not the proper task of man as man. Darkness and light are correlative things; darkness has meaning or existence only where the light with reference to which it is darkness is possible and is the normal thing. The darkness of the world can mean only that of humanity, because humanity alone is capable of the light of which the darkness is the correlative; and to speak of the darkness of humanity can only mean that the light exists for it and that its true function is to see or know the light. Moreover, that darkness too should be

possible, should actually exist, and should precede the light, so that historically light should only gradually shine out of darkness, is only a part of the universal principle and working of evolution. And the meaning of evolution, as interpreted by its final cause, or by its highest application and expression, is this: that personality which is its end is not an original fact of nature, but an ultimate act of itself. It must *become* itself, and it must *itself* become itself. This being *by* self and *for* self, which is the *differentia* and the *essentia* of personality, as the highest product and final cause of evolution, exhibits itself in a lower and preparatory way, even in the evolution of evolution itself. The law of all life, from the lowest up, is that nothing is made out of hand, but that everything in a sense makes itself by its own reactions upon other things. So life through perpetual strife with environment makes itself and rises in the scale of being only through its own victories over environment. There is no reason in itself why this should be so in the lower stages of evolution. The reason emerges and becomes apparent only in the final stage, in the production of that spiritual activity which *must* be self-activity in order to be itself. All the self-becoming of nature through its own reactions is but preparation for and prophecy of the freedom of personality as end to itself and cause of itself.

But not to dwell upon these speculations, the truth and the condition of rational, personal, or human life is that it shall know itself in order to fulfil itself, and should fulfil itself through knowing itself. The very fact of its darkness involves the truth of its light. The

light was always there to be apprehended. God's meaning, or truth, or predestination, of life was not only in His own mind or reason from the beginning, but it was immanent in all the æons of the divine evolution of it. Light, or knowledge of himself, from the beginning awaited man, and man from the beginning was constituted for and could only be consummated by self-knowledge or in the light of his own eternal truth. To be as we are predestined to be it is necessary that we shall know even as also we are known.

We are now somewhat in possession of the materials out of which to construct a connected view of the divine Logos as portrayed by St. John. He is first with God Himself, as the utterance or expression to Himself of what we can only in terms of ourselves designate as His own mind or reason, will, purpose, and actualized activity. This self-expression of God, however, has immediate reference to the cosmos. The Logos of God is logos of creation, that is, is final and first cause, reason, and meaning of it; it is the ideal and formal, or informing, principle immanent in all creation and working itself out through it. The whole creation is one and means one thing. All being or becoming is for the sake of life, and life means only the life that knows and lives itself, rational, moral, spiritual, personal life. The Logos is logos of this life, and logos of everything else, only as everything else, as the whole course of nature, is preparation and part of the life which is its end or fulfilment.

Now this mind of God, this ideal principle and final cause of all creation, this divine meaning and truth and

predestination of man as heir of all, this consummation of God Himself in all things and of all things in God, our Prologue identifies with the person of Jesus Christ. This transcendent importance of the personality of our Lord appears first in the inevitable comparison of Him with the man who stood nearest Him as His forerunner and witness. The highest attainment and glory of man is to be witness and to bear testimony to the truth; because the true progress or elevation of man as man is to be measured by his approach or propinquity to the light, by the force of his drawing to self-knowledge and self-fulfilment. The light for men, and men for the light; and the man who is most for the light is the most a man. The light that was always in the world, and that was the light of every man, was nevertheless the light of each man only as — more or less or not at all — each man in his own activities was for the light. This gave rise to the occasional appearance of individuals, who in the highest degree bore witness at once to man's capacity for the light and to the light itself as ready to answer to that capacity. There seems to have been no instance of a higher witness or testimony of this sort than in John the Baptist. And yet our Lord is contrasted with John in this respect and to this extent, that while John represents only the highest witness or testimony that humanity in itself can bear to the truth, Jesus Christ is in Himself all the truth to which humanity by its own true drawing to Him bears witness. The difference is like that between their respective baptisms. The one is in reality all that the other can only indicate or signify.

The light that was in the world, and that was the light of the world because the light of every man,— however it shone in darkness, — was to come, was coming and came, into the world in the person of Jesus Christ. I do not know to what extent it may be profitable to speculate upon the reason or the necessity of such a manifestation of the divine truth of life as involved its incarnation in Jesus Christ. It is our wisdom to understand things as they are, and not always to account for why or how they are. Any man that will know Jesus Christ will know that as a matter of fact He is the truth of God and himself, whether or no he can give a sufficient reason why or how that truth was so manifested. But the following question suggests itself, and may go a little way toward satisfying our reason upon the matter:

Could sufficient light upon ourselves, our life, and our destiny have been attained by ourselves, without the actual revelation to us of all these in Jesus Christ, to enable us so to know as to be able to realize or fulfil ourselves? But even that is not the whole question. Jesus Christ is not a revelation of mere light, in the sense of information or instruction; He is not only an object-lesson or example to us of what life is or means: He is not so much a manifestation of the life, as He is the life itself manifested; and He is come into the world not to show but to give life. The deeper and larger question then is: Could the life that is God's, and that was Christ's in our nature, be ours if it had not so come as it did in Jesus Christ? There is a great distance between a mere representative knowledge of what

Christ objectively means to us and a real knowledge of what Christ subjectively and actually is in us. The reason or necessity of such a coming to us and in us of the life itself as Christianity holds and Christianity is, can only be made apparent by yet deeper conceptions of Jesus Christ Himself. To that our remaining chapters shall be given; let us now complete the study of our Prologue.

When the Logos came into the world, He came to His own. He by whom it was, and for whom it was, could surely best claim it as such. When He came into humanity, He came in a yet closer sense to His own. Surely, if there be any ownership; if the sheep are his own to the shepherd; if the wife is his own to the husband, whose flesh and whose self she is, — men are His own to Him not only by whom they are and live, but who is to them the divine expression and reality of their own truth, perfection, and blessedness. And yet men apprehend Him not, receive Him not, can abide to be without Him. But to them that know, accept, and possess Him, He is the truth and life of themselves, because He is the truth and life of God in themselves and of themselves in God. This it is to be children of God, who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. By the Word and the Spirit, by the divine act of God Himself as He comes to us and in us, we are born into the life that is God's. and was Christ's and is ours.

XXI

THE INCARNATION

The truth as it is in Jesus Christ consists in the fact, and our apprehension of it is measured by our appreciation of the fact, that it is expressible equally in terms of man and of God. On the human side our Lord is the very fact and the very act and the very truth of humanity itself. We think most truly of Him when we see in Him the most exact truth of ourselves, and consequently when we express Him in most exact terms of ourselves. Whatever He was or did in the name or in behalf of humanity, humanity itself did and became in His person. If He was our atonement with God, it is because humanity in Him at-one-d itself with God by the one possible act, and in the one possible way, of self-reconciliation and reunion. If He was our redemption from sin, it is because humanity in Him, by the one possible attitude toward it and the one possible victory over it, put away sin from it and took to it the holiness of God. If He was our resurrection and our eternal life, it is because humanity subject in itself to the law of sin and death arose in Him from the death of sin into the life of holiness and God. That is to say, the earthly life of Jesus Christ viewed as a single and complete act must be interpreted not

merely as an act of humanity, but as the *one* act by which humanity could and did bring itself to God, make itself one with Him, redeem itself from sin, and raise itself from death. Only through that one act can humanity be saved, because that is the one act the performing of which is the holiness, righteousness, and life, in which its salvation consists. He was our atonement through the actual making us at one with God in an act which was *per se* the accomplishing of just that thing. He was our redemption by the actual breaking of the bonds of the slavery to sin from which we could not liberate ourselves. He was our resurrection and our life through a life-long act in which our own life in Him, having overcome sin, actually raised itself also from death.

But the more perfectly we interpret the life of Jesus Christ in terms of human action and human attainment, the more certain does it appear that it must be only a one-sided and half-way interpretation. As surely as that life was, from beginning to end and through and through, an act wrought by humanity in God, just so surely and so completely was it an act wrought by God in humanity. Just so truly as Jesus Christ was humanity in God so truly also was he God in humanity. The perfection of each half of the truth depends upon the perfection of the other half. When we get up to the truth at this height we see more clearly than ever the impossibility of limiting the humanity which is one side of the nature of our Lord to that of an individual man, instead of recognizing in it the common and universal nature of us all; of see-

ing in Him one man instead of all men made one with God, set free from sin, and raised up from death. But the very universality as well as the very completeness and perfection of our Lord's humanity is the incontestable and conclusive proof to us of His coequal deity. The incarnation was not for the purpose of exhibiting Godhead but of redeeming and completing manhood, and the perfection of humanity in Jesus Christ was the best and truest manifestation of deity in Him.

While, however, it is primarily in the interest of our Lord's humanity that we are compelled at last to recognize equally His divinity, it is no less in the interest too of our highest conception and knowledge of God Himself that we should do so. It shall be the object of this chapter to do two things. The first shall be to affirm as strongly as is possible the whole phenomenon of Jesus Christ in the most absolute terms of His Godhead. God was in Christ, doing in humanity all that Christ did, being in humanity all that Christ was — so that, for the time being, we shall wholly abstract our thought from any consideration of the human activity and concentrate it upon the divine activity that wrought in Him for the salvation of men. The second thing we propose is to prove that the completion and perfection of the conception and appreciation of God Himself is dependent upon the truth of His most real and actual incarnation in Jesus Christ.

With regard to the first point we have only to recall the recent course of our argument. He who is revealed and expressed to us in the person of Jesus Christ is

He who is eternally first and final cause of all things, and especially of humanity — as that in whose final destiny all things shall come back into God Himself, for whom as well as from whom they are. But more immediately and definitely than that, just what we see in the humanity itself of our Lord is not what nature is in it, nor what it is itself in its nature, through the reason and the freedom by which it is the agent of itself; but what God is in it, in the eternity of His love, the infinitude of His grace, and the perfection of His fellowship and communion. Man in Christ is what God makes him, by imparting to Him His Spirit, conforming him to His Thought or Will or Word, making him partaker of His nature and liver of His life. In Christ, God Himself is our holiness, our righteousness, our eternal life. In these and many other representations to the same effect, our humanity and our whole human activity as manifested both in its ideal and in its actual perfection in our Lord is expressed so absolutely in terms of God and not of ourselves, that it becomes difficult to human apprehension to see anything but God or anything of ourselves in Him at all. It is unnecessary to go further on this line, or longer to insist upon the (only seeming) paradox that the one truth of God's absolute self-realization in humanity through Christ in no wise contradicts, but only explains, man's absolute self-realization in God through Christ. In other words, the perfect deity of our Lord and His complete humanity, so far from mutually excluding, on the contrary mutually confirm and establish each other.

Our second position is, that Christianity will always hold, as essential to its life, to the truth at its highest, of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, not alone for the completeness of our own salvation, or in the interest of our human redemption and completion in Christ, but no less in the interest of our adequate and perfect conception of God. To put the case briefly, and afterwards justify it at length, — as true as it is to us that man would never be man without the full truth of God's self-realization in him, even so true is it that God would never be God to us without the very fullest reality of His incarnation in us. To put the truth in yet plainer and stronger form, — so far as God is in the world of our experience and is *our* God, the supreme fact which we call the Incarnation, and the supreme act in incarnation which we call the Atonement, the Redemption, or the Resurrection, were no more necessary to make man man, than they were necessary to make God God. I repeat that as in the evolution of nature and of humanity, man became man, in the highest, through the act and in the person of Jesus Christ, so — *relatively to us*, in the world and in relation to mankind as heir and interpreter of the world — God became God *to us* through the act and in the person of Jesus Christ. We saw how Jesus Christ was Logos of creation and of humanity, both of which come to their truth and meaning in Him in the end, as He was the truth and meaning of them in the beginning. We have now to see how He is Logos not only of creation, natural and spiritual, but of God Himself as expressed through these. That is to say, it is only

in Him that God not merely manifests what He is, but in His activity and self-expression through creation *becomes* what He is. What God is, and all that God is, is not an abstraction of thought, nor is it expressible merely in words. It exists and can be known only in acts. Now, which are the divine acts in creation that the most fully reveal God and *are* God? Is God all God, in the complete conception of Him, in the mere material or natural order of the universe? If He were nothing more than substance, or energy, or cause, in a mechanical construction of the universe, would He be *our* God? Can eternity or immensity or infinity or the sum of all physical attributes contain or express Him? It is only as we pass from the world of mere necessity or natural order into that of moral order that God begins to appear in those higher attributes and activities which are more expressive of Himself. The law of wills or of freedom is a higher law than the law of things or of necessity, and it is no less actual or real a law. Righteousness is as much a fact as gravitation or evolution, and the God who is righteousness is more God than one who is nothing more than energy. But a God who is a power distinctly and distinctively *not ourselves*, who stands over against us as a law to us and over us, is not yet all our God. At most He is our Lord or Master, and we are His obedient or disobedient servants. We may know His will but not Him, so long as He is outside of us and we of Him. It is only a God in whom we are and who may be in us, one who can in a unity of Spirit give Himself to us and take us into Himself, who can be to us

and whom we can know as our God. When our Lord said, The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth, — in the first place, in the very term Father He affirms a relation to God which is not that to a mere creator or cause in a natural order, nor that to a ruler or lord in a moral order, but that of son to a father in a spiritual order. In that last relation alone is there the possibility of the unity and community of spirit, of nature, and of life, which makes God in the truest and highest sense our God. And, in the second place, to worship the Father in spirit and truth means the knowing, loving, and serving Him not in outward observance of law or obedience but in interior unity and likeness of thought, affection, and will, or of disposition, character, and life. Such a relation or disposition of God to us and of us to Him involves a new conception or definition of Him. He is no longer power or wisdom or justice, which are but physical or intellectual or moral expressions of Him. He is goodness or love, which is the highest and last expression or mode of spiritual being or action.

When we say that God is goodness, or God is love, we mean that He is so not in representation but in reality, and not only in inward sentiment but in outward action. To say that God is goodness means that the universe is an activity or process of which goodness is the sole principle and the supreme end. We cannot, as with ourselves, distinguish between the divine self-representation or intention or disposition, and the actual divine working out of things. What God is He is in the world of things and in the world of ourselves.

That the universe is goodness does not of course mean that it is always and everywhere so in present seeming. It can, in fact, seem good at all only over against a seeming of evil — whether or no it is necessary to go further and say, that it can *be* good only over against an actuality of evil. The universe is goodness if its meaning, its spirit, its law, and its end, are the working out of the initial and ultimate principle of goodness or love. The natural but superficial objection to its being so from the actuality of evil answers itself the more effectually the more we reflect upon the truth that goodness in its highest and truest form can come into the world only through the overcoming of evil.

The present point is that, whatever God is in Himself eternally, what He is in the world or in us He is only in the actual process of the world and of ourselves. He will actualize or realize Himself, which means that He will become all Himself, in the world and in us, only in the totality and the perfection of the world and us. Whatever, or however much, God may be in a world of as yet only mechanical motion and order, He is certainly not all Himself, as we define Him in His further and higher relations and activities. That is to say, unless we include in these mere motions of matter the meaning of the future spirit, for which as end they exist as natural means or conditions. Whatever, moreover, God may be in a world of finite wills and relative freedom, as an objective lawgiver and law, of necessary obedience or of personal righteousness, certainly in that relation or capacity He is not the All Himself that He may be to us. God is the perfect

Self that He can be to us only in that perfection of spiritual relation in which He can be to us the perfection of goodness or love, — that is to say, in which He can give His whole self to us and take us completely into Himself. Then is He our Father, and then may we worship Him in spirit and in truth, — that is, in unity of internal disposition and in reality of oneness with Himself.

Our God must be an incarnate God, — one with us not merely in immanence of nature but in the personal unity of a perfected spiritual relation. He must be the God and Father manifested to us in our perfect sonship to Him in Jesus Christ. But God is fulfilled to us not alone in His humanity in Jesus Christ, but in all the details and in the totality of His human work in Christ. And especially does God become His whole Self to us in the completed act which we call the Cross of Christ. When we spoke of that act on its human side or as an act of humanity in Christ, we described it as the consummate act in which humanity became itself through making itself one with God. In speaking of it now on its divine side, or as an act of God in humanity, I would describe it as the consummate act in which God, viewed in His relation to the world and ourselves, *became God to us;* not merely manifested but made Himself the whole or completed Self whom we know and worship as our God. Relatively to ourselves, I must repeat, in the actual process of the world as it is, and of ourselves as we are, God is most God, God becomes to us His highest and most perfect Self, in the supreme act in which He is the most complete

realization and expression of His own divinest nature of love or goodness. It is, as I have said, not His physical attributes alone of eternity, immensity, omniscience, or omnipotence, that make Him our God. Neither is it His moral attributes alone, or His objective law to us, of justice or righteousness. What makes Him the God He is to us is the fact of His infinite goodness and love, and that fact becomes fact to us and for us and in us only in the act by which in Jesus Christ He once for all and completely made Himself one with us and so made us one with Himself. The purely relative and one-sided way of speaking of God as becoming Himself in Christ, since in Christ alone He performs the act of at-one-ing Himself with the world and the world with Himself, in which He is most supremely love, and therefore most supremely Himself, is supplemented and corrected in the New Testament, without any diminution of the truth intended to be emphasized by it. There, in the eternity of Himself, or in the timeless beginning of all things, God is always represented as, *ab initio*, meaning or intending in Himself all that is to be fulfilled in the end, and consequently as already *being* in Himself all that, in the actual process of things or of the world, He is going to *become* in them. So, for example, in the predestination of humanity in the eternity of the future, we have but the unfolding of His counsel in the eternity of the past.

Eternal love — in God and as God — defines itself in the act or process by which it realizes or accomplishes itself. If we could perfectly know love in God we should perfectly understand God in the world and

in ourselves; — and then we should perfectly know Christ, for Christ is the self-fulfilment of the divine love in the world and in ourselves. But, in our finite apprehension, we proceed, not *a priori* from the knowledge of God to that of love and of Christ, but *a posteriori* from the knowledge of Christ to that of love and so of God. Let us in that order endeavour to construe for ourselves the exact method and operation of the love of God in Jesus Christ. Perfect love in order to fulfil itself needs to know its object from the beginning and to the end. Not to speak in abstractions, let perfect love be God, and its object be man, or the creation as fulfilled in man. We begin then necessarily with the divine foreknowledge and predestination. Man must be the object of the eternal love-disposition and love-purpose of God. Love can will for its object nothing else or less than its own supreme good, and that can mean only its own completion or perfection. God, in willing for man his own or proper good, the good for which he is constituted and which is necessary to constitute him, wills for him not only natural good, — the good of outward condition, — but moral good and spiritual good — the good of his own good-will and his own right spirit. In other words, what God wills for man is not a good of environment, but the good of his own personal attitude toward and reaction with environment. There is a sense in which we may even say that the worst environment is the best, since it demands and elicits the best reaction in order to overcome it. God, then, in willing for man his own highest good spiritual, must necessarily will for him the condi-

tions necessary to the origination, exercise, and completest development of that good. The divine love will spare man nothing of the need, the effort, the pain, the trial, which are the awful cost of becoming his own highest and divinest self. The necessity laid upon man to so become himself is a necessity laid upon God to let him so become himself. What then shall love do for man? It shall certainly not save him from the supreme necessity of becoming all himself; but it shall be with him in so doing, in the way and in the degree the most perfectly conducive to the end of love which is also the end of the man. God is to us, then, first of all, divinest sympathy. He does not exempt us from, but He shares and endures with us and in us, all the extremest conditions and experiences of human life and destiny. His eternal love becomes infinite grace, which in turn develops itself in us in perfect participation or fellowship. Man is not saved from the necessity of being man, nor yet from the extremest conditions of his being so, but he has with him in all the necessary need, effort, pain, of becoming himself the divine sympathy which means, not only God with him and in him, but God suffering with him and in him. The real sympathy even of man is not only a sentiment in him who gives it, but a grace or something imparted, a fellowship or self-communicated, an actual help and strength, to him who receives it. What shall we say of him who not only by right but by act of possession has made his own the eternal love, the infinite grace, the self-imparting fellowship of God. All this is just what Jesus Christ not only means but is, is not merely

the symbol of but the reality. It is not enough to see all ourselves in Him, unless we equally see all God in Him. It is the actuality of that consummated relation between God and us that is the truth as it is in Jesus. But God imparts, communicates Himself, is with and in us, in a manner and degree of which the most perfect human sympathy is a very faint image. If we would see all the meaning of God with us and in us, we must see it in the human fulness of what Christ is. In Him, from what outward condition to which humanity is exposed was humanity exempt? Through what weakness or want or pain or effort or trial or sorrow through which human perfection must be attained was He not perfected? Yet what more could God be in man, or could He have been so much in him, otherwise than through the conditions and activities of his own manhood?

But — and this is the point to which our present argument brings us — when man through the perfect love and grace and fellowship of God in Christ has at last become himself in all the fulness of his divine predestination, has not also God in the consummated act of His own love and grace and self-fulfilment in man realized that in which in the highest His selfhood consists, and by that fact become His own highest Self in the world and in us? We speak of the incredible and impossible self-lowering or self-emptying of God in becoming man or in undergoing the death of the cross. Is the act in which love becomes perfect a contradiction or a compromise of the divine nature? Is God not God or least God in the moment in which He is

most love? Where before Christ, or otherwise than in Christ, in whom He humbled Himself to become man, and then humbled Himself with and in man to suffer what man must needs suffer in order to become what God would fain make him — and the highest and best that even God can make him — I say where before Christ, or where now otherwise than in Christ and in the cross of the divine suffering together with and for man, where in all the story of the universe was or is love so love, or God so God!

XXII

THE TRINITY

THE truth takes its own forms and expresses itself in its own ways. Our efforts at defining, proving, or establishing it are all acts after the event. It is what it is, and not what we make it. Christianity prevails in the world in a fact which we have called Trinity, and which *is* Trinity, however inadequate and unsatisfactory our explanations of the term or our analyses of the thing may be. I would describe Christianity in its largest sense to be the fulfilment of God in the world through the fulfilment of the world in God. This assumes that the world is completed in man, in whom also God is completed in the world. And so, God, the world, and man are at once completed in Jesus Christ — who, as He was the *logos* or thought of all in the divine foreknowledge of the past, so also is He the *telos* or end of all in the predestination of the future. That is to say, the perfect psychical, moral, and spiritual manhood of which Jesus Christ is to us the realization and the expression is the end of God in creation, or in evolution. I hold that neither science, philosophy, nor religion can come to any higher or other, either conjecture or conclusion, than that. But now, when we come to the actual terms or elements of God's self-

realization in us and ours in Him, we cannot think or express the process otherwise than in the threefold form of the divine love, the divine grace, and the divine fellowship, in operation or action. Putting it into scriptural phrase, we speak as exactly as popularly in defining the matter of the Gospel to be, The love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the fellowship of the Spirit. As our spiritual life is dependent upon each and all of these three constituents, so we can know God at all only as we know Him in the actual threefold relation to us of Father, Son, and Spirit.

The first element in the essential constitution of the Gospel is the fact in itself that God is love. That God is love means that He is so not only in Himself but in every activity that proceeds from Him. The very phrase The love of the Father expresses the whole principle of the universe. That God is Father means that it is His nature, or His essential activity, to reproduce Himself, to produce in all other that which He Himself is. That God in Himself is love carries with it the truth that from the beginning all things else mean, and are destined to come to, love in the end. The mystery on the way that somehow light must come out of darkness, that love must needs conquer hate, and that in everything good seems to be only the final and far off goal of ill, may puzzle us but it does not disturb the principle itself. When we come to enter fairly upon the evolution of the future, the higher not merely psychical or social or moral but spiritual life and destiny of man, all the truth gradually dawns upon us in the following discoveries, which are already established

facts of spiritual experience: The truth of all spirit is love; the matter of all law is goodness; God is not creator or cause only, nor lord or lawgiver only, but Father of all things, since all things through man are destined to share His spirit, to be partakers of His nature, and to reproduce Himself as Father in themselves as children. In order to be sons of God through actual participation in the divine nature there stands in the way indeed the need of a mighty redemption from sin and an as yet far off completion in holiness; but no matter how unredeemed or incomplete, we know beyond further question that all our salvation lies in redemption and completion, and that we shall be ourselves and the world will come to its meaning only when the self-realization of God as Father shall have accomplished itself in our self-realization as His children. If we knew the fact only that God in Himself is love, it would be to us a gospel indeed of great joy, because it would carry in it the assurance of the highest good, whatever that might be. But it would be but a partial gospel, and in fact only a gospel at all through its certainty of proceeding further.

The phrase Grace of the Son expresses that which perfectly complements and completes all that is meant by the Love of the Father. What is Fatherhood without a correlative Sonship? And what is all love even in God as its subject apart from its actuality and activity as grace in man as its object? The divine propriety of the terms Father and Son as applied to God cannot be too much magnified. The distinction between God as He is in Himself and God as He is in all possible

expressions of Himself is one that we cannot think Him at all without making. The most perfect expression of love is contained in the statement, that Love loves love. Its nature is to produce, to reproduce, to multiply itself. Itself is forever the true object of itself, at the same time that it is ever a going forth from itself into that which is not itself. This essential principle of love or self-reproduction is what makes God eternally Father. But the eternal Fatherhood is actualized only in an eternal Sonship. Nothing proceeds from the Father which is not reproduction of the Father, and is not therefore Son. Man sees himself now in nature and destinature son of God. He feels his call and obligation to fulfil God in him as Father by realizing himself in God as son. His spiritual end and impulse is to know as also he is known, to love in return as he is first loved, to apprehend that for which he is apprehended of God in Christ. In proportion as he finds the meaning and truth of his own being in the reproduction of God, in being son of God, he finds the meaning and truth of the whole creation realized and expressed in his own sonship as heir of all and end of all. And in proportion again as he thus finds all things meaning and ending in sonship, he comes at last to see God Himself as realized in the universal sonship — Himself therein realized as Eternal Father. So it is that in Jesus Christ we see everything expressed, because everything realized or fulfilled. He is all truth, because He is the truth of all things — God, Creation, Man. And because He is thus truth and expression of all, He is *Logos* of all. What else could

the *Logos* of all be but Son, or the Son but *Logos?* What could perfectly express God but that which is the perfect reproduction of Himself, or what is perfect sonship but perfect likeness?

The Grace of the Son is the divine gift of sonship. How could we have known God only in Himself? How could God have been actually our Father without the actuality of our sonship to Him? And could we have known, could we have wanted, could we have willed, could we have accomplished or attained our sonship without the gift or grace of sonship in Jesus Christ? God, we are told, predestinated us unto sonship through Jesus Christ unto himself. He predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren. In bringing many sons to glory, He gave to us a Captain of our salvation, an Author and Finisher of the faith of sonship and so of the sonship of faith, who was Himself perfected as Son through the sufferings that are necessary to the perfecting of sonship in us. We see in Jesus Christ all that is meant, involved, or implied, in the fact that He is the divine Fatherhood realized and expressed in human sonship.

If that fact, viewed in its totality, signifies not only a human act, nor only a divine act, but a divine-human act, an act of God in man which is equally an act of man in God, — then we say that Jesus Christ is not only as well the humanity as the divinity in that act, but He is the divinity as well as the humanity. He is not only the *gratia gratiata* in it but the *gratia gratians*

— not only the manhood infinitely graced but the Godhead infinitely gracing.

Jesus Christ is therefore to us no mere sample or example of divine sonship. He is no mere one man who more successfully than others has grasped and expressed the ideal of a divine sonship. Neither is He a single individual of our race whom God has elected from among equally possible others, in whom as mere revelation or example to all others to manifest the truth of God in man and man in God. On the contrary, Jesus Christ is Himself the reality of all that is manifested or expressed in Him. He is as God the grace communicating and as man the grace communicated. He is both Generator and generated with reference to the life incarnate in Him — both the sonship eternally in God to be begotten and the sonship actually begotten in man. As He was in the beginning with God and was God, so is He universally with man and is universal man.

When we have thus adequately conceived Christ as the universal truth and reality of ourselves, and in ourselves of all creation, and in creation and ourselves of God, then we are prepared for the conclusion that we know God at all, or are sons to Him as our Father, or are capable in that relation of partaking of His nature or entering into His Spirit or living His life, only in and through Jesus Christ; because Jesus Christ is the incarnation or human expression to us of the whole *Logos* of God — that is to say, of God Himself as in any way whatever knowable or communicable. We cannot get at God to know or possess Him other-

wise than as He reveals and imparts Himself; and He reveals Himself through His own Word and imparts Himself in His own Son. There and there alone is He to be known, and there He is all our own. The *Logos* who is the eternal Self-revelation of God manifests Himself as ideal principle, first and final cause, meaning and end, of creation; and the end of the whole creation which manifests God is realized through spiritual humanity in the imparted sonship of the Everlasting Son of the Father.

There is yet one other condition of truly knowing or really possessing God as wholly our God. As God is unknowable and incommunicable but through Christ, so is Christ, however perfectly He is in Himself the self-revelation and self-communication of God, not so to us but through the coequal action of the Holy Ghost. There is no knowledge of God in Himself only, there is no knowledge of God in creation only, or in others, or even in Christ only, without the answering knowledge of God in ourselves also. It is only like that answers to like. The deep that answers to deep must be the same deep. Jesus Christ expected in every son of man not only the answer of the man in him to Himself as eternal and universal Son of man, but the answer of the God in him to the perfect Godhead in Himself. Ye cannot see God in me, He says, because ye have not God in you. No man cometh unto me except the Father draw Him. I do not wish to urge the mere conventional language of Christianity, true as I believe it and helpful as I may find it to myself. I would if possible speak in the common language

of common experience. When we speak of knowing God, and having God, it must mean knowing Him where He is to be known and having Him as He is to be had. Now, whatever God is in Himself, He is knowable to us only in Jesus Christ, and He can be *our* God only as He is conceived in us by the operation of the Spirit of God and born of the want which He implants and the faith which He generates.

The doctrine of the Trinity is ordinarily thought of as the very extreme of speculative reasoning upon the nature of God. But let us remember that practical faith in the Trinity antedated any speculative thought or doctrine of the Trinity. And behind that faith the fact itself of the Trinity is all that makes God knowable by us or us capable of knowing God. Before there was the word Trinity, the new world of Christianity had come to know God in Christ, and to know Christ in itself. The entire doctrine developed out of that actual experience was nothing but a positive affirmation and a determined defence of the fulness of the truth of God in Christ and Christ in us. We can do no better than conclude this entire exposition of the Gospel with an interpretation of it in the only terms in which it is expressible, viz.: in terms of the Trinity.

We have to do now with the Trinity, not as matter of doctrine nor as object of faith, but as fact in itself. But at the same time we neither forget nor minimize the essential Christian conviction that the fact of the Trinity through the actual operation of God's Word and Spirit has been so made matter of spiritual observation and experience as to be legitimate object of faith

and material for doctrine. Our object at present, however, is not to define God but to define the Gospel, and our contention is that the Gospel is definable in facts that taken together make up the truth of the Trinity.

The first condition and constituent of the Gospel is the fact that God in Himself is love. How do we know that God is love? I believe that actually or historically we know it in Christ in whom the fact of the divine love is consummated and manifested. But in the light now of Christianity I believe that it is also philosophically demonstrable that goodness or love is the essential principle and the ultimate end of the universe. *How* God is love, not only in antecedent nature but in the actuality of self-fulfilment in the world, may be readable too in nature, — after the light thrown upon it by Christianity, — but in fact it is known in its reality only in Christ. Love is no more in God than in us an abstract disposition or affection. All the love we know is in concrete relations and the forms of affection determined by the character of those relations. Human love is marital, parental, filial, etc. — out to the wider and widest forms of national, racial, and human affinity and affection. The concrete form in which alone we can know God as love is expressed by our designation of Him as eternal Father. That gives shape and definiteness to not only our conception, but the reality itself of His relation to us and ours to Him, and no less of how that relation is to be fulfilled. The full reality of fatherhood comes about in actuality only in the full realization of sonship, and that therefore

must be God's meaning and end for all that is in the universe of His self-expression. We begin so to anticipate the truth that is to be expressed in such statements as that God has foreordained or predestined us to sonship through Jesus Christ unto Himself, that God has foreordained us to be conformed to the image of His Son, and many others to the same effect. But before we come to these unfoldings of the divine nature and purpose, let us reflect upon the following antecedent truth.

The beginning of all distinction between a pantheistic and a theistic conception of the world lies in recognizing the world as the expression, not of God Himself — or, as we say, "of His substance," — but of His *Logos*, His Thought, Will, Word. The *Logos* of God, then, is not God (ὁ θεός); we distinguish Him. And yet certainly the *Logos* is God (θεός); we identify Him. Moreover, when once we have conceived and accepted God as eternal Father, we are in position to assume that the *Logos*, not merely as the principle of the divine self-expression but as God Himself self-expressed, must manifest Himself universally as Son or in sonship; since universal and everlasting Sonship is the only self-expression of eternal and essential Fatherhood.

The first constituent, therefore, of the Gospel is the fact in itself of the divine Love in Fatherhood. The second is, the equal fact in itself of the actualization of the divine Fatherhood in creature — or, definitely, in human — Sonship. The love of the Father fulfils and manifests itself in the grace of the Son. Love is grace *potentiâ;* Grace is love *actu*, — just as Fatherhood

itself is Sonship potential, and Sonship is Fatherhood actualized. When we have once seen all humanity perfected as son in Jesus Christ, it is not hard to see in Him the whole creation so perfected in man as its head and as heir of its destiny. And then still less hard is it to see how we could never have known God as Father if He had not so fulfilled and manifested Himself as Son.

The hesitation and reluctance to see all God, and highest God, not only in the humanity but in the deepest human humiliation of Jesus Christ, is part of the disposition to measure exaltation by outward circumstance and condition instead of by inward quality and character. We find it impossible to recognize or acknowledge God in the highest act of His highest attribute. We cannot listen to the thought that it is with God as it is with us, that it only is with us because it is with God, that self-humiliation is self-exaltation. Not only in this way do we refuse to know God Himself as love, but we refuse to understand the universe as love. If we would but surrender our reason as well as our heart and will to God in Christ, we should cease to prate as we do of the mystery and the incomprehensibility of things. We could see how our Lord could say of the cross itself, Father, the hour is come. Glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee. We lose thus the supreme lesson of human experience: Not merely to conjecture that *somehow* good is the final goal of ill; but to know by actual trial just how the supremest ills are the necessary steps to the highest goods. As St. Paul says, the cross of Christ is foolishness and a stumbling block only to the earthly wise and the self-

righteous. To them that are saved, or are ever so little being saved, it is the wisdom of God and the power of God. To know God in Jesus Christ is to know the divine *Logos*, through whom alone God is knowable. It is to know him, not in His inferior activities of physical creation, nor yet in His higher capacity of lawgiver and law in a world of intelligent reason and free will. Rather is it to know Him in the act and process of that self-communication of love, grace, and fellowship, which is the basis and condition of the only real knowledge.

The third constituent of the Gospel is the fact in itself of the fellowship of the Spirit. Truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. The possibility or potentiality of such a real unity and community with God must exist somehow beforehand in our nature as spirit, or in the natural relation of our finite spirits to the Father of spirits. But the actuality of spiritual relation or intercommunication which we call fellowship is no fact of nature but an act or interaction of spirits. It is not for us to say how, theoretically, spirit can act upon spirit; all that we can do is to understand how, practically and actually, spirit does act upon spirit. The most perfect expression of the actual action of the divine upon the human spirit is contained in the words, The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the sons of God. Let us assume the objectivity or truth in itself of the eternal Fatherhood — that is to say, not only Father-relation but Father-spirit, love, will, purpose or predestination, etc. — of God in Himself. Let us also assume the objective reality as matter of fact of all that we have

claimed to have happened in Jesus Christ: viz., that in Him as Logos God revealed Himself in the universe, and that in Him as Son God fulfilled Himself in humanity. In other words, let us assume that all that God is in Himself as Father has evolved itself through nature and man in the universal and everlasting Sonship realized in Jesus Christ; God in Christ as Son is *actu* all that He is *potentiâ* in Himself as Father. When we have assumed all that body of objective truth — the truth in itself of the Father and the Son — what remains still to make it the Gospel to ourselves? Undoubtedly something remains. All the reality in the universe can be no Gospel to us so long as it remains objective, or until it enters into living relation with ourselves. Of course, it can never so enter unless there is in us the natural potentiality of entering into relation with it. But equally certainly that potentiality can only be actualized by ourselves. What is necessary within ourselves to give effect to all that is true without us is a corresponding response, or a response of correspondence, on our part. That correspondence is, I repeat, not a fact of natural relationship, but an act of spiritual communication or self-impartation. When the Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are sons of God, it is not only God who communicates the gracious fact, but it is God who awakens the humble and grateful response, and puts it into our heart to say, Abba, Father. If we cannot thus know God subjectively in ourselves, we cannot know God objectively in Jesus Christ. And if we cannot know Him in His Word and by His Spirit, we cannot know Him at all.

As we can know the eternal and universal Sonship incarnate in Jesus Christ only in the perfection of the human sonship realized in Him — in other words, as we can know the Word or Son of God only in the man Christ Jesus, so we can know the Spirit of God only in ourselves or in our own spirit. We cannot know any spirit other than our own otherwise than through a certain oneness or identity of it with our own. There must be both an inter-penetration of the two as distinct and the identification of them as one. Hence the common demand upon men to be of one spirit. What a subject of reflection then, and of realization or actualization, is there for us in the fact of our fellowship, our participation, with the Father and the Son in the unity and identity of a common Spirit. It is in this eternal Spirit that God Himself is God and is Love. It was in this eternal Spirit that the whole creation in humanity offered itself without spot to God in the person of Jesus Christ; and in that consummate act fulfilled His relation to it through realizing its own relation with Him. It is through this eternal Spirit, which is God's and Christ's and ours, that we pass from ourselves into Christ and through Christ into God.

We have seen that there could have been no Gospel of God to us except one of objective Word and subjective Spirit. All life is defined as internal correspondence with external environment. We saw, I think, long ago that as it is the function of the divine Word *aptare Deum homini*, so is it that of the divine Spirit *aptare hominem Deo*. On the same line we may say, that as eternal life is given to us in Jesus Christ to be

received, so is it given to us by the Holy Ghost to receive the life. Our Lord said of the promised Spirit, that its function should be to bring us to Him. There would be nothing to which to come if there were no objective fact and gift of life, there would be no coming to the life if there were no subjective preparing for and drawing to the life. How then finally does the Spirit fit us for Christ and fit us to Christ? It is the act and operation of the Spirit, first, that from the beginning, though yet a very far off, we can already know Christ as our own. That is the power of faith, which lives by God's Word and takes what that says as though it were. To faith Jesus Christ is the divine, not only revelation but reality of itself from the beginning of the foreknowledge of God in the eternity of the past to the end of the predestination of God in the eternity of the future. To faith Jesus Christ is all the eternal love, the all-sufficient grace, the perfect fellowship or oneness-with-it of God, which is salvation *ex parte Dei* — or *salvatio salvans;* and no less in Jesus Christ the perfection of our own faith, hope, and love, our own holiness, righteousness, and life, our own death to sin, and our own life to God, which is salvation *ex parte hominis* — or *salvatio salvata.* The Spirit thus brings us first to a perfect correspondence of faith with the fact of our life of God in Christ. But just because faith *means* life, that is, knows, desires, wills, and intends it — therefore it *is* it. God already imputes, as He will impart, and faith already appropriates, as it will possess, the life which is so believed in. So believing in it we have it already in faith, and as surely

shall have it at last in fact. Attuned to Christ by the anticipatory spell of faith, hope, and love, we shall be by a natural process of spiritual assimilation transformed into His likeness in act, character, and life, until coming to see Him perfectly as He is we shall be wholly what He is.

It has not been my object to add to the solution of the speculative problem of the Trinity. I have only aimed to show practically and spiritually that if at all we are to know and worship God in reality as our God, we must do so as Christianity has always done — in Trinity. We must worship God in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Because God is, and is operative for us, not alone in one but in all these. We cannot but distinguish the Three; it is only in the completeness of their threefold operation that we can perfectly know the One.

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